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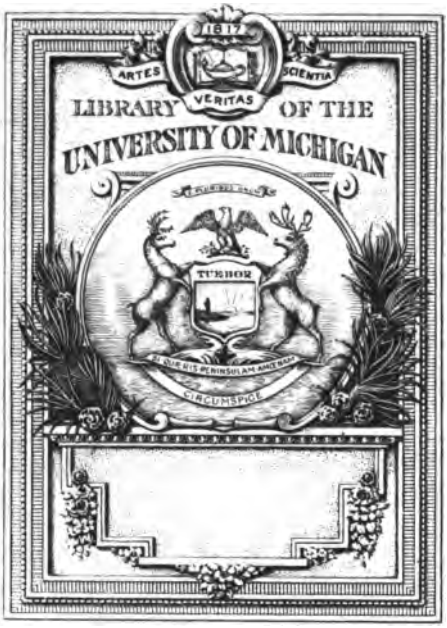

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND

GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

LATE

LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH;

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE, STUDIES,

AND

WRITINGS,

BY WILLIAM JONES, M.A. F.R.S.

ONE OF HIS LORDSHIP'S CHAPLAINS,

AND LONG HIS MOST INTIMATE AND CONFIDENTIAL FRIEND.

VOL. V.

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A

COMMENTARY

ON

THE BOOK OF PSALMS;

IN WHICH

THEIR LITERAL OR HISTORICAL SENSE, AS THEY RELATE TO KING DAVID AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, IS ILLUSTRATED;

AND THEIR APPLICATION TO MESSIAH, TO THE CHURCH, AND TO INDIVIDUALS AS MEMBERS THEREOF, IS POINTED OUT;

WITH A VIEW TO RENDER THE USE OF THE PSALTER PLEASING AND PROFITABLE TO ALL ORDERS AND DEGREES OF CHRISTIANS.

BY

GEORGE, LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH,

AND PRESIDENT OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Psalms concerning me. *Luke*, xxiv. 44.
I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 1 *Cor*. xiv. 15.
They sing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. *Rev*. xv. 3.

THE TENTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

The Psalms are an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purposes of devotion. They treat occasionally of the creation and formation of the world; the dispensations of Providence, and the economy of grace; the transactions of the patriarchs; the exodus of the children of Israel; their journey through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan; their law, priesthood, and ritual; the exploits of their great men, wrought through faith; their sins and captivities; their repentances and restorations; the sufferings and victories of David; the peaceful and happy reign of Solomon; the advent of Messiah, with its effects and consequences; his incarnation, birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, kingdom, and priesthood; the effusion of the Spirit; the conversion of the nations; the rejection of the Jews; the establishment, increase, and perpetuity of the Christian church; the end of the world; the general judgement; the condemnation of the wicked, and the final triumph of the righteous

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with their Lord and King. These are the subjects here presented to our meditations. We are instructed how to conceive of them aright, and to express the different affections which, when so conceived of, they must excite in our minds. They are, for this purpose, adorned with the figures, and set off with all the graces, of poetry; and poetry itself is designed yet farther to be recommended by the charms of music, thus consecrated to the service of God; that so delight may prepare the way for improvement, and pleasure become the handmaid of wisdom, while every turbulent passion is calmed by sacred melody, and the evil spirit is still dispossessed by the harp of the son of Jesse. This little volume, like the paradise of Eden, affords us in perfection, though in miniature, every thing that groweth elsewhere, "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and "good for food:" and above all, what was there lost, but is here restored, THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE MIDST OF THE GARDEN. That which we read, as matter of speculation, in the other Scriptures, is reduced to practice, when we recite it in the Psalms; in those, repentance and faith are described, but in these, they are acted; by a perusal of the former, we learn how others served God, but, by using the latter, we serve him ourselves. "What "is there necessary for man to know," says the pious and judicious Hooker, "which the Psalms are

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"not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy "and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation "of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered "before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect "among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite "justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repent-"ance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries "of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of "wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Provi-"dence over this world, and the promised joys of "that world which is to come; all good necessarily "to be either known or done, or had, this one "celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any "grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, "any wound or sickness named, for which there is "not, in this treasure-house, a present comfortable "remedy at all times ready to be found *." In the language of this divine book, therefore, the prayers and praises of the church have been offered up to the throne of grace from age to age. And it appears to have been the manual of the Son of God, in the days of his flesh; who, at the conclusion of his last supper, is generally supposed, and that upon good grounds, to have sung an hymn taken from it †; who

* Hooker's Ecclesiast. Pol. b. v. sect. 37.

† St. Matthew informs us, chap. xxvi. 30. that he and his apostles "sung an hymn;" and the hymn usually sung by the

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pronounced, on the cross, the beginning of the xxiid Psalm; "My God, my God, why hast thou "forsaken me?" and expired with a part of the xxxist Psalm in his mouth; "Into thy hands I com-"mend my spirit." Thus He, who had not the Spirit by measure, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who spake as never man spake, yet chose to conclude his life, to solace himself in his greatest agony, and at last to breathe out his soul, in the Psalmist's form of words rather than his own. No tongue of man or angel, as Dr. Hammond justly observes, can convey an higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright.

Proportionably to the excellency of the Psalms, hath been the number of their expositors. The ancients were chiefly taken up in making spiritual or evangelical applications of them; in adapting their discourses on them to the general exigencies of the Christian church, or to the particular necessities of the age in which they wrote. The moderns have set themselves to investigate with diligence, and ascertain with accuracy, their literal scope and meaning. Piety and devotion characterize the writings of the ancients; the commentaries of the

Jews, upon that occasion, was, what they called the "great "Hallel," consisting of the Psalms from the cxiiith to the cxviiith inclusive.

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moderns display more learning and judgement. The ancients have taught us how to rear a goodly superstructure; but the moderns have laid the surest foundation. To bring them in some measure together, is the design of the following work; in which the author has not laboured to point out what seemed wrong in either, but to extract what he judged to be right from both; to make the annotations of the latter a ground-work for improvements like those of the former; and thus to construct an edifice, solid as well as spacious. Materials, and good ones, he cannot be said to have wanted; so that if the building should give way, the cement must have been faulty, or the workman unskilful.

The right of the Psalter to a place in the sacred canon hath never been disputed; and it is often cited by our Lord and his apostles in the New Testament, as the work of the Holy Spirit. Whether David therefore, or any other prophet, was employed as the instrument of communicating to the church such or such a particular Psalm, is a question which, if it cannot always be satisfactorily answered, needs not disquiet our minds. When we discern, in an epistle, the well-known hand of a friend, we are not solicitous about the pen with which it was written.

The number of Psalms is the same in the original, and in the version of the LXX; only these

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last have, by some mistake, thrown the ninth and tenth into one, as also the hundred and fourteenth and the hundred and fifteenth, and have divided the hundred and sixteenth into two, as also the hundred and forty-seventh. The Hebrews have distributed them into five books; but for what reason, or upon what authority, we know not. This is certain, that the apostles quote from "the book of Psalms *," and that they quote the "second Psalm" of that book, in the order in which it now stands †. That division, which our own church hath made of them, into thirty portions, assigning one to each day of the month, it hath been thought expedient to set down in the margin; as persons may often choose to turn to the commentary on those Psalms, which occur in their daily course of reading.

In the titles, prefixed to some of the Psalms, there is so much obscurity, and in the conjectures which have been made concerning them, both in a literal and spiritual way, so great a variety and uncertainty, that the author, finding himself, after all his searches, unable to offer any thing which he thought could content the learned, or edify the unlearned, at length determined to omit them; as the sight of them, unexplained, only distracts the eye and attention of the reader. The omission of the word SELAH must be apologized for in the same

* Acts i. 20. † Acts xiii. 33.

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manner. The information obtained from the historical titles will be found in the Argument placed at the head of each Psalm; though even that is not always to be relied on.

Where this information failed, the occasion and drift of a Psalm were to be collected from the internal evidence contained in itself, by a diligent perusal of it, with a view to the sacred history; the light of which, when held to the Psalms, often dissipates the darkness that must otherwise for ever envelop allusions to particular events and circumstances. Sometimes, indeed, the descriptions are couched in terms more general; and then, the want of such information is less perceived. If it appear, for instance, that David, at the time of composing any Psalm, was under persecution, or had been lately delivered from it, it may not be of any great consequence, if we cannot determine with precision, whether his persecution by Saul and Doeg, or that by Absolom and Ahithophel, be intended and referred to. The expressions either of his sorrow or his joy, his strains, whether plaintive or jubilant, may be nearly the same, in both cases, respectively. This observation may be extended to many other instances of calamities bewailed, or deliverances celebrated, in the Psalms, sometimes by the prince, sometimes by the community, and frequently

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by both together. Upon the whole, it is hoped, that the design of each Psalm hath been sufficiently discovered, to explain and apply it, for the instruction and comfort of believers.

The result of such critical inquiries as were found necessary to be made, is given in as few words as possible; often only by inserting into a verse, or subjoining to it, that sense of a word, or phrase, which seemed upon mature deliberation to be the best; as it was deemed improper to clog, with prolix disquisitions of this kind, a work intended for general use. The reader will, however, reap the benefit of many such, which have been carefully consulted for him. And he will not, it is presumed, have reason to complain, that any verse is passed over without a tolerable consistent interpretation, and some useful improvement.—Where the literal sense was plain, it is noticed only so far as was necessary to make an application, or form a reflection. Where there appeared any obscurity or difficulty, recourse was had to the best critics, and that solution, which seemed the most satisfactory, given in the concicest manner. Much labour hath here been bestowed, where little appears. The plan of every Psalm hath been attentively studied, with the connexion and dependence of its parts, which it is the design of the Argument to exhibit at one view, and of the Com-

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mentary to pursue and explain from beginning to end *.

No person is more thoroughly sensible than the author is, of the respect and gratitude due from all lovers of the sacred writings, to those who have laboured in the field of literal criticism; great and illustrious characters, whose names will be had by the church in everlasting remembrance! All, who desire to understand the Scriptures, must enter into their labours, and make the proper advantage of them, as he himself hath endeavoured to do. But let us also bear in mind, that all is not done when this is done. A work of the utmost importance still remains, which it is the business of Theology † to undertake and execute; since, with respect to the Old Testament, and the Psalter more especially, a person may attain a critical and grammatical knowledge of them, and yet continue a Jew, with a veil upon his heart; an utter stranger to that sense of the

* Nos Lectoris pium hunc laborem adjuvandum suscepimus: dum constitutis argumentis scopum attentioni figimus: dum scrutarum literam, et ex sacrâ historiâ, quantum possumus, omnia repetimus; dum annotamus quæ pietatem inflamment; alia eo exemplo qærenda indicamus. BOSSUET. Dissertat. in Psal. cap. vii.

† Theologiæ insignis hic usus est, ut, verborum sensu exposito, REM intelligas. ELSNER. Præfat. ad Observat. Sacr.

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holy books, evidently intended, in such a variety of instances, to bear a testimony to the Saviour of the world; that sense, which is styled, by divines, the PROPHETICAL, EVANGELICAL, MYSTICAL, or SPIRITUAL sense. As it is one great design of the following work to investigate that sense in many of the Psalms, this is the proper place to lay before the reader those grounds and reasons upon which such investigation has been made.

That the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture, like all other good things, is liable to abuse, and that it hath been actually abused, both in ancient and modern days, cannot be denied. He who shall go about to apply, in this way, any passage, before he hath attained its literal meaning, may say what in itself is pious and true, but foreign to the text from which he endeavoureth to deduce it. St. Jerome, it is well known, when grown older and wiser, lamented, that, in the fervours of a youthful fancy, he had spiritualized the prophecy of Obadiah, before he understood it. And it must be allowed that a due attention to the occasion and scope of the Psalms, would have pared off many unseemly excrescences, which now deform the commentaries of St. Augustin, and other Fathers, upon them. But these, and other concessions of the same kind, being made, as they are made very freely, "men of sense

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"will consider, that a principle is not therefore to "be rejected, because it has been abused *;" since human errors can never invalidate the truths of God.

It may not be amiss, therefore, to run through the Psalter, and point out some of the more remarkable passages, which are cited from thence by our Lord and his apostles, and applied to matters evangelical.

No sooner have we opened the book, than the second Psalm presenteth itself, to all appearance, as an inauguration hymn, composed by David, the anointed of Jehovah, when by him crowned with victory, and placed triumphant on the sacred hill of Sion. But let us turn to Acts iv. 25. and there we find the apostles, with one voice, declaring the Psalm to be descriptive of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and of the opposition raised against his Gospel, both by Jew and Gentile.

In the eighth Psalm we imagine the writer to be setting forth the pre-eminence of man in general, above the rest of the creation; but by Heb. ii. 6. we are informed, that the supremacy conferred on the second Adam, the man Christ Jesus, over all things in heaven and earth, is the subject there treated of.

* Bishop HURD's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies, p. 64.

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St. Peter stands up, Acts ii. 25. and preaches the resurrection of Jesus from the latter part of the sixteenth Psalm; and, lo! three thousand souls are converted by the sermon.

Of the eighteenth Psalm we are told, in the course of the sacred history, 2 Sam. xxii. that "David "spake before the Lord the words of that song, in "the day that the Lord delivered him out of the "hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of "Saul." Yet in Rom. xv. 9. the 49th verse of that Psalm is adduced as a proof, that "the Gentiles "should glorify God for his mercy in Jesus Christ, "as it is written, For this cause I will confess "to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy "name."

In the nineteenth Psalm, David seems to be speaking of the material heavens, and their operations only, when he says, "their sound is gone out "into all the earth, and their words unto the ends "of the world." But St. Paul, Rom. x. 18. quotes the passage to show, that the Gospel had been universally published by the apostles.

The twenty-second Psalm Christ appropriated to himself, by beginning it in the midst of his sufferings on the cross; "My God, my God," &c. Three other verses of it are, in the New Testament, applied to him; and the words of the 8th verse were actually used by the chief priests, when they re-

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viled him; "He trusted in God," &c. Matt. xxvii. 43.

When David saith, in the fortieth Psalm, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire—Lo, I "come to do thy will;" we might suppose him only to declare in his own person, that obedience is better than sacrifice. But from Heb. x. 5. we learn, that Messiah, in that place, speaketh of his advent in the flesh, to abolish the legal sacrifices, and to do away sin, by the oblation of himself, once for all.

That tender and pathetic complaint, in the forty-first Psalm, "Mine own familiar friend in whom "I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up "his heel against me," undoubtedly might be, and probably was, originally uttered by David, upon the revolt of his old friend and counsellor, Ahithophel, to the party of his rebellious son, Absalom. But we are certain, from John xiii. 18. that this Scripture was fulfilled, when Christ was betrayed by his apostate disciple—"I speak not of you all; I know "whom I have chosen; but that the Scriptures "may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me "hath lift up his heel against me."

The forty-fourth Psalm we must suppose to have been written on occasion of a persecution under which the church at that time laboured; but a verse of it is cited, Rom. viii. 36. as expressive of what Christians were to suffer, on their blessed Master's

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account; "as it is written, For thy sake are we "killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep "appointed to be slain."

A quotation from the forty-fifth Psalm, in Heb. i. 8. certifies us, that the whole is addressed to the Son of God, and therefore celebrates his spiritual union with the church, and the happy fruits of it.

The sixty-eighth Psalm, though apparently conversant about Israelitish victories, the translation of the ark to Sion, and the services of the tabernacle, yet does, under those figures, treat of Christ's resurrection, his going up on high, leading captivity captive, pouring out the gifts of the Spirit, erecting his church in the world, and enlarging it by the accession of the nations to the faith; as will be evident to any one, who considers the force and consequence of the apostle's citation from it, Ephes. iv. 7, 8. "Unto "every one of us is given grace, according to the "measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he "saith, When he ascended up on high, he led cap-"tivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

The sixty-ninth Psalm is five times referred to in the Gospels, as being uttered by the Prophet, in the person of Messiah. The imprecations, or rather predictions, at the latter end of it, are applied, Rom. xi. 9, 10. to the Jews; and to Judas, Acts i. 20. where the hundred and ninth Psalm is also cited, as prophetical of the sore judgements which should

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befall that arch-traitor, and the wretched nation of which he was an epitome.

St. Matthew, informing us, chap. xiii. 34. that Jesus spake to the multitude in parables, gives it as one reason why he did so, "that it might be fulfilled "which was spoken by the Prophet," Psal. lxxviii. 2. "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter "things which have been kept secret from the foun-"dation of the world."

The ninety-first Psalm was applied, by the tempter, to Messiah; nor did our Lord object to the application, but only to the false inference, which his adversary suggested from it. Matt. iv. 6, 7.

The ninety-fifth Psalm is explained at large in Heb. iii. and iv. as relative to the state and trial of Christians in the world, and to their attainment of the heavenly rest.

The hundred and tenth Psalm is cited by Christ himself, Matt. xxii. 44. as treating of his exaltation, kingdom, and priesthood.

The hundred and seventeenth Psalm, consisting only of two verses, is employed, Rom. xv. 11. to prove, that the Gentiles were one day to praise God for the mercies of redemption.

The 22d verse of the hundred and eighteenth Psalm, "The stone which the builders refused," &c. is quoted six different times, as spoken of our Saviour.

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And, lastly, "the fruit of David's body," which God is said, in the hundred and thirty-second Psalm to have promised that he would place upon his' "throne," is asserted, Acts ii. 30., to be Jesus Christ.

These citations, lying dispersed through the Scriptures of the New Testament, are often suffered by common readers to pass unnoticed. And many others content themselves with saying, that they are made in a sense of accommodation, as passages may be quoted from poems of histories merely human, for the illustration of truths, of which their authors never thought. "And this," as a learned critic observes, "is no fault, but rather a beauty in writing. "A passage applied justly, and in a new sense, is "ever pleasing to an ingenious reader, who loves to "be agreeably surprised, and to see a likeness and "pertinency where he expected none. He has "that surprise, which the Latin poet so poetically "gives to the tree;

"Miraturque novas frondes, et non sua poma."

The readers, who have been accustomed to consider the New Testament citations in this view of accommodation only, must perceive the necessity of such accommodation, at least, to adapt the use of the Psalms, as a part of divine service, to the times and circumstances of the Gospel; and cannot there-

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fore reasonably object, upon their own principles, to the applications made in the following sheets for that purpose. But not to inquire, at present, whether passages are not sometimes cited in this manner, surely no one can attentively review the above-made collection of New Testament citations from the book of Psalms, as they have been placed together before him, without perceiving that the Psalms are written upon a divine, preconcerted, prophetical plan, and contain much more than, at first sight, they appear to do. They are beautiful without, but all-glorious within, like "apples of gold in pictures, or net-"work cases, of silver;" Prov. xxv. 11. The brightness of the casket attracts our attention, till, through it, upon a nearer approach, we discover its contents. And then, indeed, it may be said to have "no glory, "by reason of the glory that so far excelleth *." Very delightful and profitable they are, in their literal and historical sense, which well repayeth all the pains taken to come at it. But that once obtained, a farther scene begins to open upon us, and all the blessings of the Gospel present themselves to the eye of faith. So that the expositor is as a traveller ascending an eminence, neither unfruitful, nor unpleasant; at the top of which when he is arrived, he beholds, like Moses from the summit of mount Nebo, a more lovely and extensive prospect lying beyond it,

* 2 Cor. iii. 10.

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and stretching away to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. He sees valleys covered over with corn, blooming gardens, and verdant meadows, with flocks and herds feeding by rivers of water; till, ravished with the sight, he cries out, as Peter did at the view of his Master's glory, "It is good to be "here!"

It would be unreasonable to suppose that no parts of the Psalms may by us be spiritually applied, but such as are already expressly applied for us by the inspired writers. Let any man consider attentively a New Testament citation; then let him as carefully read over, with a view to it, the Psalm from which it is taken, and see if it will not serve him as a key, wherewith to unlock the treasures of eternal wisdom; if it will not "open his eyes," and show him "won-"derful things" in God's laws. When we are taught to consider one verse of a Psalm as spoken by Messiah, and there is no change of person, what can we conclude, but that he is the speaker through the whole? In that case, the Psalm becomes at once as much transfigured, as the blessed Person, supposed to be the subject of it, was on mount Tabor. And if Messiah be the speaker of one Psalm, what should hinder, but that another Psalm, where the same kind of scene is evidently described, and the same expressions are used, may be expounded in the same manner?

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It is very justly observed by Dr. Allix, that "although the sense of near fifty Psalms be fixed and "settled by divine authors, yet Christ and his apos-"tles did not undertake to quote all the Psalms "they could quote, but only to give a key to their "hearers, by which they might apply to the same "subjects the Psalms of the same composure and "expression*." The citations in the New Testament were made incidentally, and as occasion was given. But can we imagine, that the church was not farther instructed in the manner of applying the Psalms to her Redeemer and to herself? Did she stop at the applications thus incidentally and occasionally made by the inspired writers? Did she stop, because they had directed her how to proceed? We know she did not. The primitive fathers, it is true, for want of critical learning, and particularly a competent knowledge of the original Hebrew, often wandered in their expositions; but they are unexceptionable witnesses to us of this matter of fact, that such a method of expounding the Psalms, built upon the practice of the apostles in their writings and preachings, did universally prevail in the church from the beginning. They, who have ever looked into St. Augustin, know, that he pursues this plan invariably, treating of the Psalms as proceeding from the mouth of Christ, or of the church, or of

* Preface to his Book of Psalms, p. 9.

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both, considered as one mystical person. The same is true of Jerom, Ambrose, Arnobius, Cassiodore, Hilary, and Prosper. Chrysostom studies to make the Psalter useful to believers under the Gospel. Theodoret attends both to the literal and prophetical sense. But what is very observable, Tertullian, who flourished at the beginning of the third century, mentions it, as if it were then an allowed point in the church, that "almost all the Psalms are spoken in "the person of Christ, being addressed by the Son "to the Father, that is, by Christ to God *." In this channel flows the stream of the earliest Christian expositors. Nor did they depart, in this point, from the doctrine held in the church of the ancient Jews, who were always taught to regard MESSIAH as the capital object of the Psalter. And though, when the time came, that people would not receive Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, it does not appear that they ever objected to the propriety of the citations made by our Lord and his apostles, or thought such passages applicable to David only and his concerns. Nay, the most learned of their Rabbis, who have written since the commencement of the Christian æra, still agree with us in referring many of the Psalms to Messiah and his kingdom; differing only

* Omnes penè Psalmi Christi personam sustinent,——Filium ad patrem, id est Christum ad Deum verba facientem representant.

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about the person of the one, and the nature of the other.

When learning arose, as it were, from the dead, in the sixteenth century, and the study of primitive theology by that means revived, the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures revived with it. It was adopted at that time, by one admirably qualified to do it justice, and to recommend it again to the world by every charm of genius, and every ornament of language. I mean the accomplished Erasmus, who omitteth no opportunity of insisting on the usefulness and even the necessity of it, for the right understanding of the Scriptures; for the attainment of that wisdom which they teach, and that holiness which they prescribe; seeming to think himself never better employed, than when he is removing the earth and rubbish with which those Philistines, the monks, had stopped up the wells of salvation, opened by the apostles and first fathers of the church, for the benefit of mankind *. This great man was much importuned by his learned friends, as he informeth us in an epistle to cardinal Sadolet, to write a commentary on the Psalms †. Such a work, executed by

* Enchirid. Mil. Christ. in Præfat. Canon. 5. et passim.

† Lib. xxv. Epist. 11. edit. Froben. 10085, edit. Cler. Non semel rogatus sum, quum ab aliis, tum ab Anglorum rege, ut in omnes Psalmos ederem Commentarios; sed deterrebant me quum

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him, had been one of the richest gifts that were ever cast into the Christian treasury; as we may judge from the specimen which he hath left us, in his discourses on eleven of them. Some of these were drawn up with a view to enlarge upon the transactions of the times; and in all of them he is more diffuse and luxuriant, than, it is to be presumed, he would have been in a general exposition. But they abound with a rich variety of sacred learning, communicated in a manner ever pleasing, and ever instructive. If at any time he takes us out of the road, it is to show us a fine country, and we are still in company with Erasmus. He considers a Psalm, as it may relate to Christ, either suffering or triumphant; as it may concern the church, whether consisting of Jews or Gentiles, whether in adversity or prosperity, through the several stages and periods of its existence; and as it may be applicable to the different states and circumstances of individuals, during the trials and temptations which they meet with, in the course of their Christian pilgrimage and warfare here below, till, having overcome their last enemy, they shall sit down with their Lord in his kingdom; when the

alia multa, tum illa duo potissimum; quod viderem hoc argumentum vix posse pro dignitate tractari, nisi quis calleat Hebræorum literas, atque etiam antiquitates; partim quod verebar ne turbâ Commentariorum obscuraretur Sermo Propheticus, citius quam illustraretur.'

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scheme of prophecy shall receive its final accomplishment, and "the MYSTERY OF GOD BE FINISHED *."

It is obvious, that every part of the Psalter, when explicated according to this Scriptural and primitive method, is rendered universally "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" and the propriety immediately appears of its having always been used in the devotional way, both by the Jewish and the Christian church. With regard to the Jews, bishop Chandler very pertinently remarks, that "they must have understood David, their prince, to have been a figure of Messiah. They would not otherwise have made his Psalms part of their daily worship, nor would David have delivered them to the church to be so employed, were it not to instruct and support them in the knowledge and belief of this fundamental article. Was the Messias not concerned in the Psalms, it were absurd to celebrate, twice a day, in their public devotions, the events of one man's life, who was deceased so long ago as to have no relation now to the Jews, and the circumstances of their affairs; or to transcribe whole passages from them, into their prayers for the coming of the Messiah †." Upon the same prin-

* Rev. x. 7.

† Defence of Christianity, Part First, p. 241.

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ciple, it is easily seen, that the objections which may seem to lie against the use of Jewish services in Christian congregations, cease at once. Thus, it may be said, Are we concerned with the affairs of David and of Israel? Have we any thing to do with the ark and the temple? They are no more. Are we to go up to Jerusalem, and to worship on Sion? They are desolated and trodden under foot by the Turks. Are we to sacrifice young bullocks, according to the law? The law is abolished, never to be observed again. Do we pray for victory over Moab, Edom, and Philistia; or for deliverance from Babylon? There are no such nations, no such places in the world. What then do we mean, when, taking such expressions into our mouths, we utter them in our own persons, as parts of our devotions, before God? Assuredly we must mean a spiritual Jerusalem and Sion; a spiritual ark and temple; a spiritual law; spiritual sacrifices; and spiritual victories over spiritual enemies; all described under the old names, which are still retained, though "old things "are passed away, and all things are become new *."

* 2 Cor. v. 17. Ergo arrige aures, Christiane Lector, et ubi talia in Davide legeris, tu mihi fac cogites, non Arcam, fragile lignum, aut Tabernaculum contectum pellibus; non urbem lapidibus compositam; non Templum divinæ Majestati angustum: sed Christi et Ecclesiæ Sacramenta, sed vivos lapides, Christo angulari lapidi coaptatos; sed ipsam Eucharistiam præ-

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By substituting Messiah for David, the Gospel for the law, the church Christian for that of Israel, and the enemies of the one for those of the other, the Psalms are made our own. Nay, they are, with more fulness and propriety, applied now to the substance, than they were of old to the "shadow of good "things then to come *." And, therefore, ever since the commencement of the Christian æra, the church hath chosen to celebrate the Gospel mysteries in the words of these ancient hymns, rather than to compose for that purpose new ones of her own. For, let it not pass unobserved that, when, upon the first publication of the Gospel, the apostles had occasion to utter their transports of joy, on their being counted worthy to suffer for the name of their dear Lord and Master, which was then opposed by Jew and Gentile, they brake forth into an application of the second Psalm to the transactions then before their eyes: see Acts iv. 25. The primitive Christians constantly followed this method, in their devotions; and particularly when, delivered out of the hands of persecuting tyrants by the victories of Constantine, they praised God for his goodness, and the glorious success and establishment of Christ's religion, no words were found so exquisitely adapted to the pur-

sentis Dei testem; denique cæleste regnum et æternam felicitatem. BOSSUET, Dissertat. de Psal. cap. i. ad fin.

* Heb. x. 1.

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pose, as those of David, in the xcvith, xcviiith, and other Psalms—"Sing unto the Lord a new song: "sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the "Lord, and praise his name: be telling of his sal- "vation from day to day. Declare his honour unto "the heathen, his worship unto all people," &c. &c. &c. In these, and the like Psalms, WE continue to praise God, for all his spiritual mercies in Christ, to this day.

The Psalms, thus applied, have advantages which no fresh compositions, however finely executed, can possibly have; since, besides their incomparable fitness to express our sentiments, they are, at the same time, memorials of, and appeals to, former mercies and deliverances; they are acknowledgements of prophecies accomplished; they point out the connexion between the old and new dispensations, thereby teaching us to admire and adore the wisdom of God displayed in both, and furnishing, while we read or sing them, an inexhaustible variety of the noblest matter that can engage the contemplations of man.

Why is the mind more than ordinarily affected, and either melted into sorrow, or transported with joy, when, on the days set apart for the commemoration of our Saviour's birth, passion, resurrection, &c. the Proper Psalms are read, which the church hath appointed, following herein the directions of evangelists and apostles, and the usage of the early ages?

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Why, but because, by such appointment, we are necessarily put upon transferring our ideas from the complaints or exultations of David and Israel, to those of a suffering or glorified Messiah, of whose sufferings or glories we participate, as members of his mystical body? And how much more intense would be the effect, if, in the sermons preached on those occasions, such Proper Psalms were expounded to the people, and their propriety evinced, as it might easily be! Discourses of this kind would make the hearts of the auditors to "burn within them;" and men would cease to wonder, that three thousand Jews were converted to the faith by St. Peter's animated discourse on part of the sixteenth Psalm. Were believers once brought well acquainted with these Proper Psalms, they would be better enabled to study and apply the rest, which might likewise be explained to them, at different times, and certainly afford the finest subjects on which a Christian orator can apply his eloquence. That this was done in the primitive church, we learn from the exposition of the Psalms left us by St. Chrysostom in the east, and St. Augustin in the west, those expositions still subsisting in the form of homilies, as delivered to their respective congregations. Is it not to be feared that, for want of such instructions, the repetition of the Psalms, as performed by multitudes, is but one degree above mechanism? And is it not a

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melancholy reflection to be made, at the close of a long life, that, after reciting them, at proper seasons, through the greatest part of it, no more should be known of their true meaning and application, than when the Psalter was first taken in hand at school?

Many sensible and well-disposed persons, therefore, who, when they read or sing the Psalms, desire to read and to sing "with the spirit and the understanding," have long called for a commentary which might enable them to do so, which might not only explain the literal sense of these divine compositions, and show how they may be accommodated to our temporal affairs, as members of civil society*; but might also unfold the mysteries of the kingdom of God, which are involved in them, and teach their application to us, as members of that spiritual and heavenly society of which Christ Jesus is the head, and for whose use, in every age, they were intended by their omniscient Author. A work of this kind

* A concern for the present peace and prosperity of the world, and of that kingdom in it to which we belong, ought ever to be entertained and cherished by the most exalted Christian. And if this part of the subject should, at any time, in the following work, appear to be but slightly touched upon, the reason is, because it lies obvious upon the surface, and has been so frequently inculcated by other expositors. Nor are mankind indeed so liable to forget the relation they bear to the world, as they are to overlook that which subsists between them and their Creator and Redeemer.

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though often desired, has never yet been executed, upon any regular and consistent plan. The survey of a province in theology, hitherto almost unoccupied among the moderns, which promised a great deal of pleasing as well as profitable employment, gave birth to the attempt which hath been made to cultivate it, in the ensuing Commentary; in which the author has only endeavoured to evince, by an induction of particulars, the truth of what so many learned and good men have asserted in general, concerning the prophetical, or evangelical, import of the Psalter. Dr. Hammond, in the preface to his Annotations, tells us, he chose to leave every man to make applications of this kind for himself, finding he had work enough upon his hands in the literal way. But so much having been done by him, and other able critics, in that way, it seems to be now time that something should be done in the other, and some directions given, in a case where directions cannot but be greatly wanted.

Very few of the Psalms, comparatively, appear to be simply prophetical, and to belong only to Messiah, without the intervention of any other person. Most of them, it is apprehended, have a double sense, which stands upon this ground and foundation, that the ancient patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, were typical characters, in their several offices, and in the more remarkable passages of their lives,

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their extraordinary depressions, and miraculous exaltations, foreshowing Him who was to arise, as the Head of the holy family, the great Prophet, the true Priest, the everlasting King. The Israelitish polity, and the law of Moses, were purposely framed after the example and shadow of things spiritual and heavenly; and the events which happened to the ancient people of God, were designed to shadow out parallel occurrences, which should afterwards take place, in the accomplishment of man's redemption, and the rise and progress of the Christian church. For this reason, the Psalms composed for the use of Israel, and Israel's monarch, and by them accordingly used at the time, do admit of an application to us, who are now "the Israel of God *," and to our Redeemer, who is the king of this Israel †.

Nor will this seem strange to us, if we reflect, that the same divine Person, who inspired the Psalms, did also foreknow and predispose all the events of which he intended them to treat. And hence it is evident, that the spiritual sense is, and must be, pe-

* Gal. vi. 16.

† That expressions and descriptions in human writings are often so framed as to admit of a double sense, without any impropriety or confusion, is shown by the very learned Mr. MERRICK, in his excellent Observations on Dr. BENSON'S Essay concerning the Unity of Sense, &c. subjoined to his Annotations on the Psalms.

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culiar to the Scriptures; because of those persons and transactions only, which are there mentioned and recorded, can it be affirmed for certain, that they were designed to be figurative. And should any one attempt to apply the narrative of Alexander's expedition by Quintus Curtius, or the Commentaries of Cæsar, as the New Testament writers have done, and taught us to do, the histories of the Old, he would find himself unable to proceed three steps with consistency and propriety. The argument, therefore, which would infer the absurdity of supposing the Scriptures to have a spiritual sense, from the acknowledged absurdity of supposing histories or poems merely human to have it, is inconclusive; the sacred writings differing, in this respect, from all other writings in the world, as much as the nature of the transactions which they relate differs from that of all other transactions, and the author who relates them differs from all other authors.

"This double, or secondary, sense of prophecy, "was so far from giving offence to Lord Bacon, that "he speaks of it with admiration, as one striking ar-"gument of its divinity. *In sorting the prophecies* "*of Scripture with their events, we must allow* (says "he) *for that latitude, which is agreeable and fami-*"*liar unto divine prophecies, being of the nature of* "*the Author, with whom* a thousand years are but "as one day; *and therefore they are not fulfilled*

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" *punctually at once, but have springing and ger-*
" *minant accoomplishment through many ages,*
" *though the height, or fulness of them, may refer*
" *to some one age.*

" But, that we may not mistake, or pervert, this
" fine observation of our great philosopher, it may
" be proper to take notice, that the reason of it holds
" in such prophecies only as respect the several suc-
" cessive parts of one system; which being intimate-
" ly connected together, may be supposed to come
" within the view and contemplation of the same
" prophecy; whereas it would be endless and one
" sees not on what grounds of reason we are autho-
" rized, to look out for the accomplishment of pro-
" phecy, in any casual unrelated events of general
" history. The Scripture speaks of prophecy, as re-
" specting Jesus, that is, as being one connected
" scheme of Providence, of which the Jewish dis-
" pensation makes a part; so that here we are led
" to expect that *springing and germinant accom-*
" *plishment,* which is mentioned. But had the Jew-
" ish law been complete in itself, and totally unre-
" lated to the Christian, the general principle—*that*
" *a thousand years are with God but as one day*—
" would no more justify us in extending a Jewish
" prophecy to Christian events, because perhaps it
" was eminently fulfilled in them, than it would
" justify us in extending it to any other signally cor-

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"responding events whatsoever. It is only when "the prophet hath one uniform connected design "before him, that we are authorized to use this lati- "tude of interpretation. For then the prophetic "spirit naturally runs along the several parts of "*such* design, and unites the remotest events with "the nearest: the style of the prophet, in the mean "time, so adapting itself to this double prospect, as "to paint the near and subordinate event in terms "that *emphatically* represent the distant and more "considerable. So that, with this explanation, no- "thing can be more just or philosophical, than the "idea which Lord Bacon suggests of divine prophecy.

"The great scheme of redemption, we are now "considering, being the only scheme in the plan of "Providence, which, as far as we know, hath been "prepared and dignified by a continued system of "prophecy, at least this being the only scheme to "which we have seen a prophetic system applied, "men do not so readily apprehend the doctrine of "*double senses* in prophecy, as they would do if they "saw it exemplified in other cases. But what the "history of mankind does not supply, we may re- "present to ourselves by many obvious supposi- "tions; which cannot justify, indeed, such a scheme "of things, but may facilitate the conception of it *."

* Bishop HURD's excellent Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies. Serm. iii.

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In allegories framed by man, the ground-work is generally fiction *, because of the difficulty of finding one true series of facts, which shall exactly represent another. But the great Disposer of events, "known unto whom are all his works," from the beginning to the end of time, was able to effect this; and the Scripture allegories are therefore equally true in the letter and in the spirit of them. The events signifying, no less than those signified, really happened as they are said to have done †. Why the allegories of this most perfect form, with which the book of God abounds, and which are all pregnant with truths of the highest import, should be treated with neglect and contempt, while the imperfect allegories of man's devising are universally sought after and admired, as the most pleasing and efficacious method

* I say, "generally," since, as the above cited Mr. MERRICK justly observes, "It is possible (for example) in a complimental "address to a modern statesman, or general, to relate the actions "of some ancient patriot of the same character, in such a man-"ner, that the parallel intended to be drawn between them, "shall be readily known, and the praises expressly bestowed on "the one, be transferred, by the reader's own application, to "the other."

† Neque propterea ab historico, sive literali atque immediato, ut aiunt, sensu aberrare nos oportet; quin eo erit clarior et fundatior secretioris illius intelligentiæ sensus, quo typum ipsum, hoc est, historiam ac literam figemus certius. BOSSUET. Dissertat. in Psal. ad finem.

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of conveying instruction, it is not easy to say. Why should it not afford a believer as much delight, to contemplate the lineaments of his Saviour, portrayed in one of the patriarchs, as to be informed, that the character of Iapis was designed by Virgil to adumbrate that of Antonius Musa, physician to Augustus? Or why should not a discourse upon the redemption of the church, as foreshadowed by the exodus of Israel, having as many admirers among Christians, as a dissertation, however ingeniously composed, on the descent of Æneas to the infernal regions, considered as typical of an initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries?

A learned, judicious, and most elegant writer of the present age hath stated and illustrated the subject we are now upon, with a felicity of thought and expression peculiar to himself. I shall endeavour to gratify the English reader with a view of his sentiments. The beauties of his language are not to be translated.

"It would be an arduous and adventurous under-
"taking to attempt to lay down the rules observed
"in the conduct of the Mystic Allegory; so diverse
"are the modes in which the Holy Spirit has thought
"proper to communicate his counsels to different
"persons, upon different occasions; inspiring and
"directing the minds of the prophets according to
"his good pleasure; at one time vouchsafing more

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"full and free discoveries of future events; while, at "another, he is more obscure and sparing in his inti- "mations. From hence, of course, ariseth a great "variety in the Scripture usage of this kind of alle- "gory, as to the manner in which the spiritual sense "is couched under the other. Sometimes it can hardly "break forth and shew itself at intervals through the "literal, which meets the eye as the ruling sense, "and seems to have taken entire possession of the "words and phrases. On the contrary, it is much "oftener the capital figure in the piece, and stands "confessed at once by such splendour of language, "that the letter, in its turn, is thrown into shade, and "almost totally disappears. Sometimes it shines "with a constant equable light; and sometimes it "darts upon us on a sudden, like a flash of lightning "from the clouds. But a composition is never "more truly elegant and beautiful, than when the "two senses, alike conspicuous, run parallel together "through the whole poem, mutually corresponding "with, and illustrating each other. I will produce "an undoubted instance or two of this kind, which "will show my meaning, and confirm what has "hitherto been advanced on this subject of the mystic "allegory.

"The establishment of David upon his throne, "notwithstanding the opposition made to it by his "enemies, is the subject of the second Psalm.

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"David sustains in it a twofold character, literal and "allegorical. If we read over the Psalm, first with "an eye to the literal David, the meaning is obvious, "and put out of all dispute by the sacred history. "There is indeed an uncommon glow in the expres-"sion, and sublimity in the figures, and the diction "is now and then exaggerated, as it were on purpose "to intimate, and lead us to, the contemplation of "higher and more important matters concealed "within. In compliance with this admonition, if we "take another survey of the Psalm, as relative to "the person and concerns of the spiritual David, a "nobler series of events instantly rises to view, and "the meaning becomes more evident, as well as "exalted. The colouring, which may perhaps seem "too bold and glaring for the king of Israel, will "no longer appear so, when laid upon his great "antitype. After we have thus attentively con-"sidered the subjects apart, let us look at them to-"gether, and we shall behold the full beauty and "majesty of this most charming poem. We shall "perceive the two senses, very distinct from each "other, yet conspiring in perfect harmony, and bear-"ing a wonderful resemblance in every feature and "lineament, while the analogy between them is so "exactly preserved, that either may pass for the "original from whence the other was copied. New "light is continually cast upon the phraseology,

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"fresh weight and dignity are added to the sentiment, "till gradually ascending from things below to things "above, from human affairs to those which are divine, "they bear the great important theme upwards with "them, and at length place it in the height and "brightness of heaven.

"What hath been observed with regard to this "Psalm, may also be applied to the seventy-second; "the subject of which is of the same kind, and "treated in the same manner. Its title might be, "*The Inauguration of Solomon.* The scheme of the "allegory is alike in both; but a diversity of matter "occasions an alteration in the diction. For whereas "one is employed in celebrating the magnificent "triumphs of victory, it is the design of the other "to draw a pleasing picture of peace, and of that "felicity which is her inseparable attendant. The "style is, therefore, of a more even and temperate "sort, and more richly ornamented. It abounded th "not with those sudden changes of the person "speaking, which dazzle and astonish; but the "imagery is borrowed from the delightful scenes "with which creation cheers the sight, and the pencil "of the divine artist is dipped in the softer colours "of nature. And here we may take notice how "peculiarly adapted to the genius of this kind of "allegory the parabolical style is, on account of that "great variety of natural images to be found in it.

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"For as these images are capable of being employed "in the illustration of things divine and human, be-"tween which there is a certain analogy maintained, "so they easily afford that ambiguity which is ne-"cessary in this species of composition, where the "language is applicable to each sense, and obscure "in neither; it comprehends both parts of the alle-"gory, and may be clearly and distinctly referred to "one or the other *."

The scheme of exposition so beautifully delineated and illustrated in two instances by this truly valuable author, has been extended, in theory, by another learned writer, to a great part of the Psalter; and that upon a principle deduced from the attributes of God, and the nature and design of the divine dispensations; though his own labours, like those of Dr. Hammond, were employed chiefly in literal criticism. His reasoning is as follows:

"In this point (namely, the application of the "Psalms to the mysteries of the Gospel) I am very "clear. The Jews only, as a nation, acknowledged "the one supreme God, under the name of Jehovah; "they must be, therefore, his peculiar people. There "is nothing capricious in this; they are correlates, "and of necessity answer reciprocally to each other. "Hence that singular intercourse between God and "them. Hence, among other instances of his favour, "his communication of himself to them by superna-

* Bishop LOWTH on the Hebrew Poetry, Lect. xi.

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"tural ways of Oracle, Inspiration, &c. When the "acknowledgement of the one God branched itself "from this Jewish stock, over the face of the earth, "and by that means he was become the God of all "mankind, they must all, for the same reason, be-"come his people. As God is ever the same, and his "doings uniform, his conduct towards mankind must "exactly be proportioned to his conduct towards the "Jewish nation. Let us, therefore, place God in com-"mon over them both; and there will be—on one "side, the Jewish nation; and on the other, mankind: "on one side, Canaan, and a national prosperity; "on the other, heaven and human happiness: on "one side, a redemption from Egyptian servitude, "and national evils; on the other, a redemption of "the whole human race from absolute evil: on one "side, national crimes atoned by national ceremonies, "sacrifices, priests; on the other, sins expiated by "the one universal sacrifice of Jesus Christ: on "one side, national and temporary saviours, kings, "prophets, &c.; on the other, all this universal, and "eternal: on one side, the Law, and every branch "of it, adapted to a favourite nation; on the other, "the everlasting Gospel, suited to all mankind. It "is impossible, therefore, that God can say any "thing to David, under the quality of king of this "chosen nation, which he does not speak, at the "same time, to Jesus Christ, as King of all the "elect, and that in a truer and nobler sense. To

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"each of them he speaks in a sense adapted to the "nature of their respective kingdoms. Nor is the "latter a bare accommodation of words, but the "first and highest meaning of them, and which only, "absolutely speaking, can be the true sense of God; "the other being this sense, confined to a particular "circumstance; in other words, an absolute truth, "made history and matter of fact. This is a prin-"ciple, which shows, that, far from denying the "Christian application, I consider the literal and "historical sense only as a kind of vehicle for it *."

Upon this plan it is, that many of the Psalms are interpreted in the following sheets.

In such of them as were written by David, and treat of his affairs, that extraordinary person is considered as an illustrious representative of Messiah, who is more than once foretold under the name of David, and to whom are applied, in the New Testament, Psalms which do undoubtedly, in the letter of them, relate to David, and were composed on occasion of particular occurrences which befell him; a circumstance in theology, to be accounted for upon no other principle.

When, therefore, he describeth himself as one hated and persecuted without a cause; as one accused of crimes which he never committed, and suffering for sins the very thoughts of which he abhorred; as

* Preface to an Essay toward a New English Version of the Book of Psalms, by the reverend Mr. MUDGE.

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one whose life was imbittered by affliction, and his soul overwhelmed with sorrows; yet, withal, as one whom no troubles could induce to renounce his trust and confidence in the promises of God concerning him; when he repeated his resolutions of adhering to the divine law, setting forth its various excellencies, and the comforts which it afforded him in the days of adversity; when he complaineth of that implacable malice, and unrelenting fury, with which he was pursued by Saul and his attendants, by Doeg the Edomite, by rebellious Absalom, traitorous Ahithophel, &c. and when, contrary to all appearances, he predicteth their destruction, with his own final exaltation; in expounding the Psalms of this cast and complexion, it hath been my endeavour to direct the reader's thoughts to parallel circumstances, which present themselves in the history of the true David; his sorrows and sufferings; his resignation under them all; his obedience to the will of his Father; the temper and behaviour of his betrayers and murderers; the prophecies of judgements to be inflicted upon them, and of glory to be conferred upon him. As the Psalter was the liturgy of the Jewish church, of which our Lord was a member, and to which he therefore entirely conformed during his abode and humiliation upon earth, he might pour forth his complaints, and "offer up his prayers and supplications, "with strong crying and tears *," in the very words

* Heb. v. 7.

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which his progenitor David had before used under his own troubles, but which were given by inspiration, with a view to the case of that blessed Person whom, in those troubles, he had the honour to prefigure.

Other Psalms there are, which disclose far different scenes. In them the sorrows of David are at an end, and the day of his deliverance hath already dawned. The heavens are opened, and Jehovah appeareth in the cause of his afflicted servant. He descendeth from above, encompassed with clouds and darkness, preceded by fire and hail, proclaimed by thunder and earthquake, and attended by lightnings and whirlwinds. The mountains smoke, and the rocks melt before him; the foundations of the globe are uncovered, and the deep from beneath is moved at his presence. The adversary is dismayed and confounded; opposition, in the height of its career, feels the blast through all its powers, and instantly withers away. The anointed of God, according to his original designation, is at length elevated to the throne; his sceptre is extended over the nations; the temple is planned by him, and erected by his son; the services of religion are appointed in perfect order and beauty; Jerusalem becometh a praise in all the earth: and the kingdom is established in honour, peace, and felicity. If in Psalms of the former kind the holy Jesus might behold those persecutions and sufferings, under which he was to be

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humbled, and to mourn, during his pilgrimage here below; in Psalms of this latter sort, he might strengthen and console himself, as a man "touched "with the feeling of our infirmities, and tempted in "all points like as we are," by viewing "the glory "that should follow;" by contemplating the manifestation of the Father in favour of his beloved Son; his own joyful resurrection, triumphant ascension, and magnificent inauguration; the conversion of the world, and the establishment of the church; events, which were foreshadowed by those above mentioned: and to which, when the strongest expressions made use of by the divine Psalmist are applied, they will no longer appear hyperbolical; especially if we bear in mind, that these prophetic descriptions wait for their full and final accomplishment at that day, when the mystical "body of Christ," having "filled up "that which is behind of his afflictions *," shall also, amidst the pangs and convulsions of departing nature, arise from the dead, and ascend into heaven; where all the members of that body, which have been afflicted and have mourned with their Lord and Master, shall be comforted and glorified together with him †.

* Colos. i. 24.

† Neque prætermittendum illud Augustini passim: tunc Psalmos videri suavissimos, ac divinissimâ luce perfusos, cùm in his caput et membra, Christum et Ecclesiam, sive apertè propalatos, sive latenter designatos intelligimus—Quare iterùm atque iterùm

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In some of the Psalms, David appears as one suffering for his sins. When man speaks of sin, he speaks of what is his own; and, therefore, every Psalm where sin is confessed to be the cause of sorrow, belongs originally and properly to us, as fallen sons of Adam, like David and all other men. This is the case of the fifty-first, and the rest of those which are styled Penitential Psalms, and have always been used in the church as such. Sometimes, indeed, it happens, that we meet with heavy complaints of the number and burden of sins, in Psalms from which passages are quoted in the New Testament as uttered by our Redeemer, and in which there seems to be no change of person, from beginning to end. We are assured, for instance, by the apostle, Heb. x. 5. that the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses of the fortieth Psalm, "Sacrifice and offering "thou didst not desire," &c. are spoken by Messiah coming to abolish the legal sacrifices, by the oblation of himself once for all. The same person, to ap-

erigamus animos: atque ubi Davidem atque Solomonem; ubi Davidis hostes, Saülem, Achitophelem, alios; ubi bella et pacem, captivitatem, libertatem, ac cætera ejusmodi audimus; tum animo infigamus Christum, et Ecclesiam laboribus periculisque exercitam, atque inter adversa et prospera peregrinantem; tum sanctorum persecutores, non modò visibiles, sed etiam invisibiles illas atque aëreas potestates, pugnasque in hâc vitâ perpetes, ac secuturam postea pacem sempiternam. Bossuet, Dissertat. in Psal. ad fin.

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pearance, continues speaking, and, only three verses after, complains in the following terms: "Innumera-
"ble evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities
"have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to
"look up; they are more than the hairs of my head,
"therefore my heart faileth me." So again, there are no less than five quotations from different parts of the sixty-ninth Psalm, all concurring to inform us that Christ is the speaker through that whole Psalm. Yet the fifth verse of it runs thus: "O God, thou knowest
"my foolishness, and my אשם guiltiness is not hid
"from thee." The solution of this difficulty given, and continually insisted on, in the writings of the Fathers, is this; that Christ, in the day of his passion, standing charged with the sin and guilt of his people, speaks of such their sin and guilt as if they were his own, appropriating to himself those debts for which, in the capacity of a surety, he had made himself responsible. The lamb which, under the law, was offered for sin, took the name אשם, "guilt," because the guilt contracted by the offerer was transferred to that innocent creature, and typically expiated by its blood *. Was not this exactly the case, in truth and reality, with the Lamb of God? "He did no sin,
"neither was guile found in his mouth; but he bare
"our sins in his own body on the tree †. He was made
"sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made

* See Levit. v. 6. † 1 Pet. ii. 22.

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"the righteousness of God in him *." Christ and the church compose one mystical person, of which he is the head, and the church the body; and as the body speaks by the head, and the head for the body, he speaks of her sin, and she of his righteousness; which consideration is at the same time a key to any claims of righteousness made in the Psalms by her, and to any confession of sin made by him. This seems to be a satisfactory account of the matter. Such, at least, appears to have been the idea generally adopted and received, in the first ages of the Christian church; a circumstance which, it is presumed, will be deemed a sufficient apology for the author, if, in the explication of such passages, he hath ventured to proceed accordingly. Nay, and even in reciting the Penitential Psalms, when the unhappy sufferer is ready to sink down under that weight of woe which sin hath laid upon him, if he will extend his thoughts, as he is sometimes directed to do, to that holy and most innocent Person, who felt and sorrowed so much for us all, he will thereby furnish himself with the best argument for patience, and an inexhaustible source of comfort. Nor can it, indeed, well be imagined, that our blessed Lord, as a member of the Jewish church, and an attendant on the service of the synagogue, though conscious to himself of no sin, did not frequently join with his

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

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"brethren according to the flesh," in the repetition of the Penitential, as well as the other Psalms, on the days of humiliation and expiation, when the use of them might be prescribed. If, from his circumcision to his crucifixion, "he bare our sins in "his own body;" why should it be thought strange, that he should confess them, on our behalf, with his own mouth?

The offence taken at the supposed uncharitable and vindictive spirit of the imprecations, which occur in some of the Psalms, ceases immediately, if we change the imperative for the future, and read, not "LET THEM BE confounded," &c. but, "THEY "SHALL BE confounded," &c. of which the Hebrew is equally capable. Such passages will then have no more difficulty in them, than the other frequent predictions of divine vengeance in the writings of the prophets, or denunciations of it in the Gospels, intended to warn, to alarm, and to lead sinners to repentance, that they may fly from the wrath to come. This is Dr. Hammond's observation; who very properly remarks, at the same time, that in many places of this sort, as particularly in Psalm cix. (and the same may be said of Psalm lxix.) it is reasonable to resolve, that Christ himself speaketh in the prophet; as being the person there principally concerned, and the completion most signal in many circumstances there mentioned; the succession especially of Mat-

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thias to the apostleship of Judas. It is true, that in the citation made by St. Peter from Psal. cix. in Acts i. 20. as also that made by St. Paul from Ps. lxix. in Rom. xi. 9. the imperative form is preserved; "LET his habitation be void," &c. "LET their table "be made a snare," &c. But it may be considered, that the apostles generally cited from the Greek of the LXX version; and took it as they found it, making no alteration, when the passage, as it there stood, was sufficient to prove the main point which it was adduced to prove. If the imprecatory form be still contended for, all that can be meant by it, whether uttered by the Prophet, by Messiah, or by ourselves, must be a solemn ratification of the just judgements of the Almighty against his impenitent enemies, like what we find ascribed to the blessed spirits in heaven, when such judgements were executed: Rev. xi. 17, 18. xvi. 5, 6, 7.: see Merrick's Annotations on Ps. cix. and Witsii Miscellan. Sacr. lib. i. cap. xviii. sect. 24. But, by the future rendering the verbs, every possible objection is precluded at once. The method has therefore been adopted in the ensuing Commentary.

Of the psalms which relate to Israel, some are employed in celebrating the mercies vouchsafed them, from their going forth out of Egypt, to their complete settlement in Canaan. These were the constant standing subjects of praise and thanksgiving in the

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Israelitish church. But we are taught, by the writers of the New Testament, to consider this part of their history as one continued figure, or allegory. We are told that there is another spiritual Israel of God; other children of Abraham, and heirs of the promise; another circumcision; another Egypt, from the bondage of which they are redeemed; another wilderness, through which they journey; other dangers and difficulties which there await them; other bread from heaven for their support; and another rock to supply them with living water; other enemies to overcome; another land of Canaan, and another Jerusalem, which they are to obtain, and to possess for ever. In the same light are to be viewed the various provocations and punishments, captivities and restorations, of old Israel afterwards, concerning which it is likewise true, that they "happened unto "them for ensamples," types *, or figures "and were "written for our admonition †." Care has therefore been taken to open and apply, for that salutary purpose, the psalms which treat of the above-mentioned particulars.

What is said in the Psalms occasionally of the law and its ceremonies, sacrifices, ablutions, and purifications; of the tabernacle and temple, with the services therein performed; and of the Aaronical priesthood; all this Christians transfer to the new

* Gr. Τυποι. † 1 Cor. x. 11.

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law; to the oblation of Christ; to justification by his blood, and sanctification by his Spirit; to the true tabernacle, or temple not made with hands; and to what was therein done for the salvation of the world, by Him who was, in one respect, a Sacrifice; in another, a Temple; and in a third, an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek. That such was the intention of these legal figures, is declared at large in the Epistle to the Hebrews: and they are of great assistance to us now, in forming our ideas of the realities to which they correspond. "Under "the Jewish economy," says the excellent Mr. Pascal, "truth appeared but in a figure; in heaven "it is open, and without a veil; in the church mili- "tant it is so veiled, as to be yet discerned by its "correspondence to the figure. As the figure was "first built upon the truth, so the truth is now dis- "tinguishable by the figure." The variety of strong expressions used by David in the nineteenth and the hundred and nineteenth Psalms, to extol the enlivening, saving, healing, comforting efficacy of a law, which, in the letter of it, whether ceremonial or moral, without pardon and grace, could minister nothing but condemnation, do sufficiently prove, that David understood the spirit of it, which was the Gospel itself*. And if any, who recited those

* Hæc inter, veri et spirituales Judæi, hoc est, ante Christum Christi discipuli, altiora cogitabant, et rerum cœlestium Sacra-

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psalms, had not the same idea, it was not the fault of the Law or of the Psalms, of Moses or of David, or of him who inspired both, but it was their own; as it is that of the Jews, at this hour, though their prophecies have now been fulfilled, and their types realized. "He that takes his estimate of the Jewish "religion from the grossness of the Jewish multi-"tude," as the last cited author observes, "cannot "fail of making a very wrong judgement. It is to "be sought for in the sacred writings of the prophets,

menta venerati, novam Jerusalem, novum templum, novam arcam intuebantur. BOSSUET, Dissertat. in Psal. cap. i.—Lex, juxta Spiritum accepta, ipsum erat Evangelium, sub veteribus figuris delitescens, et ceremoniarum velis obtectum, ab ipso quidem Mose (imprimis in Deuteronomio) aliquatenus et pro temporum ratione explicatum, a prophetis verò succedentibus (ut visum est Divinæ Sapientiæ), dilucidius ostensum, demum a Christo et apostolis plenissime et luce ipso sole clariori patefactum. BULLI Opera per Grabe, p. 614.—If the Jews, as our Saviour tells them, "thought they had eternal life in their Scriptures," they must needs have understood them in a spiritual sense: and I know not what other spiritual sense, that should lead them to the expectation of eternal life, they could put on their Scriptures, but that prophetical or typical sense, which respected the Messiah. Jesus expressly asserts, at the same time, that their "Scriptures testified of Him." How generally they did so, he explained at large, in that remarkable conversation with two of his disciples after his resurrection; when, "be-"ginning at Moses, and ALL the prophets, he expounded unto "them in ALL the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." HURD's Introd. to the Study of the Prophecies, Serm. ii.

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"who have given us sufficient assurance, that they "understood the law not according to the letter. "Our religion, in like manner, is true and divine in "the Gospels, and in the preaching of the apostles; "but it appears utterly disfigured in those who maim "or corrupt it."

Besides the figures supplied by the history of Israel, and by the law, there is another set of images often employed in the Psalms, to describe the blessings of redemption. These are borrowed from the natural world, the manner of its original production, and the operations continually carried on in it. The visible works of God are formed to lead us, under the direction of his word, to a knowledge of those which are invisible; they give us ideas, by analogy, of a new creation rising gradually, like the old one, out of darkness and deformity, until at length it arrives at the perfection of glory and beauty; so that while we praise the Lord for all the wonders of his power, wisdom, and love, displayed in a system which is to wax old and perish, we may therein contemplate, as in a glass, those new heavens, and that new earth, of whose duration there shall be no end *.

* Read nature; nature is a friend to truth;
Nature is CHRISTIAN, preaches to mankind;
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.

YOUNG.

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The sun, that fountain of life, and heart of the world, that bright leader of the armies of heaven, enthroned in glorious majesty; the moon shining with a lustre borrowed from his beams; the stars glittering by night in the clear firmament; the air giving breath to all things that live and move; the interchanges of light and darkness; the course of the year, and the sweet vicissitudes of seasons; the rain and the dew descending from above, and the fruitfulness of the earth caused by them; the bow bent by the hands of the Most High, which compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle; the awful voice of thunder, and the piercing power of lightning; the instincts of animals *, and the qualities of vegetables and mine-

* "I believe, a good natural philosopher might show, with "great reason and probability, that there is scarce beast, bird, "reptile, or insect, that does not, in each particular climate, in-"struct and admonish mankind of some necessary truth for their "happiness either in body or mind." Dr. CHEYNE's Philosophical Conjectures on the Preference of Vegetable Food, p. 78. That which a celebrated writer has observed concerning a poet, may perhaps be equally applicable to a divine—"To him no-"thing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is "dreadful, should be familiar to his imagination: he should be "conversant with all that is awfully vast, or elegantly little. "The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the mine-"rals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, should all concur to "store his mind with inexhaustible variety; for every idea is "useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious "truth; and he who knows most, will have most power of di-

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rals; the great and wide sea, with its unnumbered inhabitants; all these are ready to instruct us in the mysteries of faith, and the duties of morality:—

> They speak their Maker as they can,
> But want and ask the tongue of man.
>
> PARNELL.

The advantages of Messiah's reign are represented, in some of the Psalms, under images of this kind. We behold a renovation of all things, and the world, as it were, new created, breaks forth into singing. The earth is crowned with sudden verdure and fertility; the field is joyful, and all that is in it; the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; the floods clap their hands in concert, and ocean fills up the mighty chorus, to celebrate the advent of the Great King.

Similar to these, are the representations of spiritual mercies by temporal deliverances from sickness,

" versifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote " allusions, and unexpected instruction. By him, therefore, no " kind of knowledge should be overlooked. He should range " mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pic- " ture upon his mind every tree of the forest, and flower of the " valley; the crags of the rock, and the mazes of the stream." RASSELAS, chap. x. The reader may see this exemplified in some " Disquisitions on Select Subjects of Scripture," by my worthy friend, the reverend Mr. JONES, whose labours make it evident, that true philosophy will ever be the handmaid of true divinity.

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prison, danger of perishing in storms at sea, and from the sundry kinds of calamity and death, to which the body of man is subject; as also by scenes of domestic felicity, and by the flourishing state of well-ordered communities, especially that of Israel in Canaan, which, while the benediction of Jehovah rested upon it, was a picture of heaven itself. The foregoing and every other species of the sacred imagery, if there be any other not hitherto included, it hath been the author's main endeavour to illustrate. And a view of what is done in this way will, it is humbly hoped, afford some reason to think, there may not be that necessary connexion, which a late nobler writer has been pleased to suppose, between DEVOTION and DULNESS.

The Psalms which remain are such as treat, in plain terms, without figures or examples, of wisdom and folly, righteousness and sin; the happiness produced by one, and the misery caused by the other; of particular virtues and vices; of the vanity of human life; of the attributes of God; of that patience with which the faithful should learn to bear the sight of wickedness triumphant in this world, looking forward to the day of final retribution; and subjects of the like nature. As Psalms of this kind call for little in the expository way, the general doctrines or precepts implied in them, or suggested by them, are drawn forth in short reflections, attempted after the

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manner of those made by father Quesnel on each verse of the New Testament. The opportunity of doing this, where nothing else seemed to be required, and indeed of doing, upon every occasion, what did seem to be required in any way, was the reason for throwing the work into its present form, rather than that of a paraphrase, or any other. Some repetitions, in a performance of this sort, are unavoidable. But a Commentary on the Book of Psalms is not to be read all at once *; and it was thought better to give the exposition of each Psalm complete in itself, than to refer the reader elsewhere; which, therefore, is only done, when passages of a considerable length occur in two Psalms, without any material difference.

Such is the method the author has taken, such the authorities upon which he has proceeded, and such the rules by which he has directed himself. If consistency and uniformity in the comment have been the result, they will afford, it is hoped, no contemptible argument on its behalf; since it is scarce possi-

* The most profitable way of reading it, perhaps, would be, by small portions, often reviewing the text and the comment, and comparing them carefully together; at times when the mind is most free, vacant, and calm; in the morning, more especially, to prepare and fortify it for the business of the day; and in the evening, to recompose, and set it in order, for the approaching season of rest.

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ble to expound uniformly, on an erroneous plan, so great a variety of figurative language, as is to be found in the book of Psalms *.

Let us stop for a moment, to contemplate the true character of these sacred hymns.

Greatness confers no exemption from the cares and sorrows of life. Its share of them frequently bears a melancholy proportion to its exaltation. This the Israelitish monarch experienced. He sought in piety that peace which he could not find in empire, and alleviated the disquietudes of state with the exercises of devotion.

* The student in Theology, who is desirous of farther information upon a subject so curious, so entertaining, and so interesting, as that of the figurative language of Scripture, the principles on which it is founded, and the best rules to be observed in the sober and rational interpretation of it, may find satisfaction, by consulting the following authors:—

LOWTH's Preface to his Commentary on the Prophets.

LOWTH, Prælect. de Sacr. Poes. Heb. Prælect. iv.—xii.

PASCHAL's Thoughts, sect. x.—xiv.

HURD's Introd. to the Study of the Prophecies. Serm. ii. iii. iv.

VITRINGA, Observat. Sacr. lib. vi. cap. xx. et lib. vii.

————, Præfat. ad Comment. in JESAIAM.

GLASSII Philologia Sacra, lib. ii.

WITSII Miscellan. Sacra, tom. i. lib. iii. cap. iii. lib. ii. Dissert. i. ii. Œconom. Fœd. lib. iv. cap. vi.—x.

WATERLAND's General Preface to *Scripture Vindicated.*

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His invaluable Psalms convey those comforts to others which they afforded to himself. Composed upon particular occasions, yet designed for general use; delivered out as services for Israelites under the law, yet no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the Gospel; they present religion to us in the most engaging dress; communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption. Calculated alike to profit and to please, they inform the understanding, elevate the affections, and entertain the imagination. Indited, under the influence of Him to whom all hearts are known, and all events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conforming itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrancy; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best.

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And now, could the author flatter himself, that any one would take half the pleasure in reading the following exposition, which he hath taken in writing it, he would not fear the loss of his labour. The employment detached him from the bustle and hurry of life, the din of politics, and the noise of folly; vanity and vexation flew away for a season, care and disquietude came not near his dwelling. He arose, fresh as the morning, to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it: and he can truly say, that food and rest were not preferred before it. Every Psalm improved infinitely upon his acquaintance with it, and no one gave him uneasiness but the last; for then he grieved that his work was done. Happier hours than those which have been spent on these meditations on the Songs of Sion, he never expects to see in this world. Very pleasantly did they pass, and moved smoothly and swiftly along; for when thus engaged, he counted no time. They are gone, but have left a relish and a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet.

—But, alas! these are the fond effusions of parental tenderness. Others will view the production with very different eyes; and the harsh voice of inexorable criticism will too soon awaken him from his pleasing dream. He is not insensible, that many learned and good men, whom he does not therefore value and respect the less, have conceived strong prejudices

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against the scheme of interpretation here pursued; and he knows how little the generality of modern Christians have been accustomed to speculations of this kind; which, it may likewise, perhaps, be said, will give occasion to the scoffs of our adversaries, the Jews and the deists. Yet, if in the preceding pages it hath been made to appear, that the application of the Psalms to evangelical subjects, times, and circumstances, stands upon firm ground; that it may be prosecuted upon a regular and consistent plan; and that it is not only expedient, but even necessary to render the use of them in our devotions rational and profitable; will it be presumption in him to hope that, upon a calm and dispassionate review of the matter, prejudices may subside, and be done away? If men, in these days, have not been accustomed to such contemplations, is it not high time they should become so? Can they begin too soon to study, and make themselves masters of, a science which promises to its votaries so much entertainment, as well as improvement; which recommends the Scriptures to persons of true taste and genius, as books intended equally for our delight and instruction; which demonstrates the ways of celestial wisdom to be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths to be peace indeed? From the most sober, deliberate, and attentive survey of the sentiments which prevailed upon this point, in the first ages of the church, when the

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apostolical method of citing and expounding the Psalms was fresh upon the minds of their followers, the author cannot but be confident, that his Commentary, if it had then made its appearance, would have been universally received and approved, as to the general design of it, by the whole Christian world. And, however the Jews, in their present state of alienation and unbelief, may reject and set at nought such applications of their Scriptures to our Messiah and his chosen people, as they certainly will do; he is not less confident, that, whenever the happy and glorious day of their conversion shall come, and the veil shall be taken from their hearts, they will behold the Psalter in that light in which he has endeavoured to place it*. As to the deists, they,

* "If this appears to be the case in so many of the Psalms "(namely, that they are predictive of MESSIAH), how strongly "does it justify our Lord's appeal to them as treating of Him! "And what a noble argument may hence arise for the convic- "tion and conversion of that extraordinary people, to whom they "were originally communicated, when once *the veil that is on* "*their hearts shall be taken away*, as by the same Spirit of pro- "phecy we are assured it shall!" The bishop of CARLISLE'S *Theory of Religion*, p. 176, 6th edit. With what transports of zeal and devotion, of faith and love, will *they* recite these holy hymns, in the day when the whole body of the Jews, returning to the Lord their God, shall acknowledge their unparalleled crime in the murder of their King, and their penitential sorrow for the same, perhaps, as his Lordship intimates, in the words of the fifty-first Psalm: "Deliver me from BLOOD-GUILTINESS,

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while they continue such, can have neither lot nor part in this matter; for giving no credit to the Scripture account of things, either in the Old Testament or the New, to discourse with them concerning a connexion and analogy subsisting between the one and the other, is to reason about a fifth sense with a man who has only four. For the conviction both of the Jews and deists, other arguments are to be urged; arguments from undeniable miracles openly wrought, and plain prophecies literally fulfilled. Such proofs are "for them that believe not." And such have been repeatedly urged, in their full force, by the many able champions, who have stood forth (success evermore attend their labours!) in defence of the evidences of Christianity. Expositions and meditations, like those in the subsequent pages, serve not, nor are intended to serve, "for them who be-"lieve not, but for them who believe *;" who will exercise their faculties in discerning and contem-

"O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing "aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips, and "my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou desirest not "SACRIFICE, else would I give it; thou delightest not in "BURNT-OFFERING. The sacrifices of God are a broken spi-"rit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not de-"spise. O do good in thy good pleasure to Zion; build thou "the walls of JERUSALEM!"

* 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

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plating the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and who are going on unto perfection; to increase their faith, and inflame their charity: to delight them in prosperity, to comfort them in adversity, to edify them at all times. Such effects, the author doubts not, will be experienced by believers, who will read this book with an honest and good heart, with seriousness and attention; for though he humbly trusts it will not be deemed altogether unworthy a place in the libraries of the learned, he builds chiefly on that approbation which he is solicitous it should receive in the closets of the devout; as considering, that it is LOVE, heavenly LOVE, which "never faileth; but whether there be "prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, "they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it "shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we "prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect "is come, then that which is in part shall be done "away *." They who find not the wished-for satisfaction in one portion, will find it in another; they who disapprove of an interpretation at the first reading, may, perhaps, approve of it at the second; and they who still continue to disapprove of some particulars, will not therefore disdain to accept the benefit of the rest. He has written to gratify no sect or

* 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

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party, but for the common service of all who call on the name of JESUS, wheresoever dispersed, and howsoever distressed, upon the earth. When he views the innumerable unhappy differences among Christians, all of whom are equally oppressed with the cares and calamities of life, he often calls to mind those beautiful and affecting words which Milton represents Adam as addressing to Eve, after they had wearied themselves with mutual complaints and accusations of each other :—

> But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
> Each other, blamed enough elsewhere; but strive
> In offices of love, how we may lighten
> Each other's burden in our share of woe.
>
> B. x. V. 958.

Enough has been given to the arts of controversy. Let something be given to the studies of piety and a holy life. If we can once unite in these, our tempers may be better disposed to unite in doctrine. When we shall be duly prepared to receive it, "God "may reveal even this unto us." To increase the number of disputes among us, is, therefore, by no means the intent of this publication. The author having, for many years, accustomed himself to consider and apply the Psalms, while he recited them, according to the method now laid down, has never failed to experience the unspeakable benefit of it,

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both in public and in private; and would wish, if it so pleased God, that death might find him employed in meditations of this kind*. He has likewise frequently taken occasion, in the course of his ministry, to explain a Psalm, upon the same plan, from the pulpit; and whenever he has done so, whether the audience were learned or unlearned, polite or rustic, he has generally had the happiness to find the discourse, in an especial manner, noticed and remembered. But still many may be of a different opinion, who may conscientiously believe the doctrines, and practise the duties of the Gospel, whether they see them shadowed out in the Psalms or not. Such will enjoy their own liberty, and permit their brethren to do the same. Or, if they shall think it necessary to take up the polemical pen, he desires only to receive that treatment, which he has himself shown to every writer, cited or referred to by him †.

* "I have lost a world of time," said the learned SALMASIUS, on his death-bed; "if I had one year more, I would spend it in "reading DAVID'S PSALMS, and PAUL'S EPISTLES."

† Detur igitur erratis meis venia: ipse demum exemplo meo mihi prosim, qui neminem eorum, a quibus dissenserim, contumeliis affecti; qui non, vitio criticorum, in diversæ sententiæ propugnatores acriter invectus sum; qui denique eam veniam antecessoribus meis libens tribui, quam ab iis, qui hæc in manus sumturi sint, velim impetrare. PEARCE in Præfat. ad edit. Cic. de Oratore.

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instead of engaging in a tedious, and, perhaps, unprofitable altercation upon the subject, he feels himself at present much rather inclined, in such a case, to follow, at his proper distance, the amiable example of his greatly respected Diocesan, who reprinted in England the objections made by a foreign professor, to some parts of his Lectures on the Hebrew Poetry, and left the public to form its own judgement between them *. From that Public, the author of the following work is now to expect the determination of his fate. Should its sentence be in his disfavour, nothing further remains to be said, than that he has honestly and faithfully endeavoured to serve it, to the utmost of his power, in the way, in which he thought himself best able; and to give the world some account of that time, and those op-

* "In his quæ sunt, quæ mihi minus persuasit Vir Clarissimus, ea malui hoc modo libero lectorum nostrorum judicio permittere, quam in disceptationem et controversiam injucundam, et fortasse infructuosam, vocare." LOWTH, in Præf. ad edit. 2dam Prælect. de Sacra Poesi Hebræorum. "Authors should avoid, as much as they can," says another very learned critic, "replies and rejoinders, the usual consequences of which are, loss of time and loss of temper. Happy is he who is engaged in controversy with his own passions, and comes off superior; who makes it his endeavour, that his follies and weaknesses may die before him, and who daily meditates on mortality and immortality." JORTIN's Preface to his Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, p. xxxiv.

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portunities, which by the providence of a gracious God, and the munificence of a pious Founder, he has long enjoyed in the happy retirement of a college.

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THAT the reader may the more easily turn to such Psalms as will best suit the present state of his mind, according to the different circumstances, whether external or internal, into which, by the changes and chances of life, or the variations of temper and disposition, he may, at any time, be thrown, the common Table of Psalms, classed under their several subjects, is here subjoined.

PRAYERS.

I. *Prayers* for pardon of sin. *Psalm* 6, 25, 38, 51, 130. *Psalms* styled *Penitential*, 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

II. *Prayers* composed when the Psalmist was deprived of an opportunity of the public exercise of religion. *Psalm* 42, 43, 63, 84.

III. *Prayers* wherein the Psalmist seems extremely dejected, though not totally deprived of consolation, under his afflictions. *Psalm* 13, 22, 69, 77, 88, 143.

IV. *Prayers* wherein the Psalmist asketh help of GOD, in consideration of his own integrity, and the uprightness of his cause. *Psalm* 7, 17, 26, 35.

V. *Prayers* expressing the firmest trust and confidence in GOD under afflictions. *Psalm* 3, 16, 27, 31, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 71, 86.

VI. *Prayers* composed when the people of GOD were under affliction or persecution. *Psalm* 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 89, 94, 102, 123, 137.

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VII. The following are likewise *Prayers* in time of trouble and affliction. *Psalm* 4, 5, 11, 28, 41, 55, 59, 64, 70, 109, 120, 140, 141, 142.

VIII. *Prayers* of INTERCESSION. *Psalm* 20, 67, 122, 132, 144.

PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING.

I. *Thanksgivings* for mercies vouchsafed to particular persons. *Psalm* 9, 18, 22, 30, 34, 40, 75, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138, 144.

II. *Thanksgivings* for mercies vouchsafed to the Israelites in general. *Psalm* 46, 48, 65, 66, 68, 76, 81, 85, 98, 105, 124, 126, 129, 135, 136, 149.

PSALMS OF PRAISE AND ADORATION, DISPLAYING THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

I. General acknowledgements of God's *Goodness* and *Mercy*, and particularly his care and protection of good men. *Psalm* 23, 34, 36, 91, 100, 103, 107, 117, 121, 145, 146.

II. *Psalms* displaying the *Power*, *Majesty*, *Glory*, and other attributes of the Divine Being. *Psalm* 8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 111, 113, 114, 115, 134, 139, 147, 148, 150.

INSTRUCTIVE PSALMS.

I. The different characters of good and bad men: The happiness of the one, and the miseries of the other, are represented in the following *Psalms*, 1, 5, 7, 9, 10,

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11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 50, 52, 53, 58, 73, 75, 84, 91, 92, 94, 112, 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 133.

II. The Excellence of God's Law. *Psalm* 19, 119.

III. The Vanity of human Life. *Psalm* 39, 49, 90.

IV. Advice to Magistrates. *Psalm* 82, 101.

V. The Virtue of Humility. *Psalm* 131.

Psalms more eminently and directly prophetical.

Psalm 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 72, 87, 110, 118.

Historical Psalms.

Psalm 78, 105, 106.

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A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

BOOK OF PSALMS.

FIRST DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM I.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, which is generally looked upon by expositors as a preface or introduction to the rest, describes the blessedness of the righteous, consisting, ver. 1. negatively in their abstaining from sin; 2. positively, in holy meditation on the Scriptures, productive of continual growth in grace, which, 3. is beautifully represented under an image borrowed from vegetation; as, 4. is the opposite state of the unbelieving and ungodly, by a comparison taken from the threshing-floor. The last two verses foretel the final issue of things, with respect to both good and bad men, at the great day.

Ver. 1. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

The Psalter, like the Sermon on the Mount, openeth with a "beatitude," for our comfort and encou-

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ragement, directing us immediately to that happiness which all mankind, in different ways, are seeking and inquiring after. All would secure themselves from the incursions of misery; but all do not consider that misery is the offspring of sin, from which it is therefore necessary to be delivered and preserved, in order to become happy, or "blessed." The variety of expressions, here used by David, intimateth to us, that there is a gradation in wickedness; and that he who would not persist in evil courses, or commence a scoffer at the mystery of godliness, must have no fellowship with bad men: since it is impossible for any one, who forsakes the right path, to say, whither he shall wander; and few, when they begin to "walk in the counsel of the ungodly," propose finally to sit down in the "seat of the scornful." O thou second Adam, who alone, since the transgression of the first, hast attained a sinless perfection, make thy servants "blessed," by making them "righteous," through thy merits and grace!

2. *But his delight* is *in the law of the* LORD; *and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

He who hath once brought himself to "delight" in the Scriptures, will find no temptation to exchange that pleasure for any which the world or the flesh can offer him. Such an one will make the lively oracles of God his companions by day and by night. He will have recourse to them for direction, in the bright and cheerful hours of prosperity; to them he will apply for comfort, in the dark and dreary seasons of adversity. The enemy, when advancing to the assault, will always find him well employed, and will

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be received with—"Get thee behind me, Satan!" When the law of God is the object of our studies and meditations, we are conformed to the example of our Redeemer himself, who, as a man, while he "increased in stature," increased likewise "in wisdom," and grew powerful in the knowledge of the law which he was to fulfil, and of those prophecies which he was to accomplish; so that, at twelve years of age, he appeared to "have more understanding than all "his teachers; for the divine testimonies had been "his meditation." Ps. cxix. 99.

3. *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

By continual meditation in the sacred writings, a man as naturally improves and advances in holiness, as a "tree" thrives and flourishes in a kindly and well-watered soil. All the "fruits of righteousness show themselves at their proper "season" as opportunity calls for them; and his words, which are to his actions what the "leaves" are to the fruit, fall not to the ground, but are profitable, as well as ornamental. Every thing in him and about him serves the purpose for which it was intended; his brethren are benefited by him, and his Maker is glorified. How eminently is this the case with that TREE OF LIFE, which Jehovah planted in the midst of his new paradise, by the waters of comfort; a tree which sprung out of the earth, but its height reached to heaven, and its breadth to the ends of the world! its shadow is for the protection, its fruit for the sup-

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port, and its leaves for the healing, of the nations. It flourishes in immortal youth, and blooms for ever in unfading beauty. See Rev. xxii. 2.

4. *The ungodly* are *not so; but* are *like the chaff, which the wind driveth away.*

In the foregoing description of the righteous, all appeared verdant and fruitful, lovely and enduring; but here, by way of contrast, we are presented with nothing but what is withered and worthless, without form or stability, blown about by every wind, and at length finally dispersed from the face of the earth, by the breath of God's displeasure, and driven into the fire prepared for it. Such is the state, such the lot of the "ungodly;" and so justly are they compared to "chaff."

5. *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*

A day is coming, when the divine Husbandman shall appear with his "fan in his hand," and shall "thoroughly purge his floor." The wheat, which shall stand the winnowing of that day, will be gathered into the celestial granary; while the chaff, for ever separated from it, shall be hurried out of the floor, and carried, by a mighty whirlwind, to its own place. Then shall there be a "congregation of "the righteous," in which "sinners shall not stand." At present wheat and chaff lie in one floor; wheat and tares grow in one field; good and bad fishes are comprehended in one net; good and bad men are contained in the visible church. Let us wait with patience God's time of separation.

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6. *For the* LORD *knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*

In the present scene of confusion, we may be, and often are, deceived in the judgement we form of men. But it cannot be so with the Omniscient. "The "foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" 2 Tim. ii. 19. Their good deeds are not unobserved, nor will they be forgotten by him. His eye seeth them in secret, and his hand will reward them openly, in the day of final retribution; when crowns of glory shall sparkle on the heads of the righteous, but shame and torment shall be the portion of the wicked; "the "way of the ungodly shall perish."

PSALM II.

ARGUMENT.

David, seated upon the throne of Israel, notwithstanding the opposition made against him, and now about to carry his victorious arms amongst the neighbouring heathen nations, may be supposed to have penned this, as a kind of inauguration psalm. But that "a greater than David is here," appears not only from the strength of the expressions, which are more properly applicable to Messiah, than to David himself; but also from the citations made in the New Testament; the appointment of the Psalm by the church to be read on Easter day; and the confessions of the Jewish

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rabbis. It treats therefore, 1—3. of the opposition raised, both by Jew and Gentile against the kingdom of Jesus Christ; 4—6. of his victory, and the confusion of his enemies; 7—9. after his resurrection, he preaches the Gospel; and, 10—12. calls the kings of the earth to accept it; denouncing vengeance against those who shall not do so, and pronouncing a blessing on those who shall.

1. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the* LORD, *and against his anointed,* saying,—

The true David is introduced, like his ancestor of old, expostulating with the nations, for their vain attempts to frustrate the divine decree in his favour. These two verses are cited, Acts, iv. 27. and thus expounded—"Lord—of a truth, against thy holy child "Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and "Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people "of Israel, were gathered together, for to do what-"soever thy hand and thy counsel determined before "to be done." Persecution may be carried on by the people, but it is raised and fomented by kings and rulers. After the ascension of Christ, and the effusion of the Spirit, the whole power of the Roman empire was employed in the same cause, by those who, from time to time, swayed the sceptre of the world. But still, they who intended to extirpate the faith, and destroy the church, how many and how mighty soever they might be, were found only to

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"imagine a vain thing." And equally vain will every imagination be, that exalteth itself against the counsels of God for the salvation of his people.

3. *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

These words, supposed to be spoken by the powers in arms against Messiah, discover to us the true ground of opposition, namely, the unwillingness of rebellious nature to submit to the obligations of divine laws, which cross the interests, and lay a restraint upon the desires, of men. Corrupt affections are the most inveterate enemies of Christ; and their language is, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Doctrines would be readily believed, if they involved in them no precepts; and the church may be tolerated by the world, if she will only give up her discipline.

4. *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the* LORD *shall have them in derision.*

By these and such like expressions, which frequently occur in the Scripture, we are taught, in a language which we understand, because borrowed from ourselves, and our manner of showing contempt, how the schemes of worldly politicians appear to him, who, sitting upon his heavenly throne, surveys at a glance whatever men are doing, or contriving to do, upon the earth. This is the idea intended to be conveyed; and from it we are to separate all notions of levity, or whatever else may offend when applied to the Godhead, though adhering to the phrases as in use among the sons of Adam. The same is to be said with regard to words which seem to attribute many

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other human passions and affections to the Deity: as, for instance, these which follow:—

5. *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.* 6. *Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.*

The meaning is, that by pouring out his indignation upon the adversaries of Messiah, as formerly upon those of David, God would no less evidently convict and reprove their folly and impiety, than if he had actually thus spoken to them from his eternal throne above: "Yet, notwithstanding all your rage "against him, have I raised from the dead, and ex-"alted as the Head of the church, my appointed "King Messiah; in like manner as I once set his "victorious representative David upon my holy hill "of Sion, in the earthly Jerusalem, out of the reach "of his numerous and implacable enemies." Let us reflect, for our comfort, that He who raised up his son Jesus, has promised to raise up us also who believe in him; and that the world can no more prevent the exaltation of the members, than it could prevent that of the Head.

7. *I will declare the decree: the* LORD *hath said unto me, Thou* art *my Son: this day have I begotten thee.*

Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with honour and immortality, upon the holy hill of Zion, in the new Jerusalem, now "declares the decree," or preaches the Gospel of the everlasting covenant. His part in the covenant was performed by keeping the law, and dying for the sins of men. Nothing therefore remained but the accomplishment of the pro-

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mise made to him by the Father, upon those conditions. One part of this promise was fulfilled, saith St. Paul, "in that he had raised up Jesus again; as it is "written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this "day have I begotten thee:" Acts xiii. 33. Another part was fulfilled at the ascension of Christ, and his inauguration to an eternal kingdom, and an unchangeable priesthood, as the true Melchizedek, King of righteousness, King of peace, and Priest of the most high God. The next article in the covenant, on the Father's side, was the enlargement of Messiah's spiritual kingdom, by the accession of the nations to the church. And accordingly, this was the next thing which "Jehovah said unto him," after having proclaimed his Sonship and pre-eminence; as we find by the following verse:

8. *Ask of me, and I shall give* thee *the heathen* for *thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth* for *thy possession.*

Christ was to enter upon the exercise of the intercessorial branch of his priestly office with a request of the Father, that the "heathen world might "be given for his inheritance, and the uttermost "parts of the earth for his possession," in return for the labours he had undergone, and the pains he had endured: as also to supply the place of the Jews, who were his original "inheritance and pos-"session," but were cast off, because of unbelief. That such request was made by Christ, and granted by the Father, the person who writes this, and he who reads it, in a once Pagan, but now Christian island, are both witnesses.

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9. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

The irresistible power and inflexible justice of Christ's kingdom are signified by his "ruling with a "rod of iron;" the impotence of those who presume to oppose him, is compared to that of "a potter's "vessel," which must fly in pieces at the first stroke of the iron rod. The power of Christ will be manifested in all, by the destruction either of sin, or the sinner. The hearts which now yield to the impressions of his Spirit, are broken only in order to be formed anew, and to become vessels of honour, fitted for the Master's use. Those which continue stubborn and hardened, must be dashed in pieces by the stroke of eternal vengeance.

10. *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.* 11. *Serve the* LORD *with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*

The decree of the Father, concerning the kingdom of the Son, being thus promulgated by the latter, an exhortation is made to the kings of the earth, that they would learn true wisdom, and suffer themselves to be instructed unto salvation; that they would bow their sceptres to the cross of Jesus, and cast their crowns before his throne; esteeming it a far greater honour, as well as a more exalted pleasure, to serve Him, than to find themselves at the head of victorious armies, surrounded by applauding nations.

12. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish* from *the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed* are *all they that put their trust in him.*

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Christ beseeches kings, no less than their subjects, to be reconciled to him, and by him to the Father: since a day is at hand, when mighty men shall have no distinction, but that of being mightily tormented. And then will be seen the "blessedness" of those who "put their trust in" the Lord Jesus. For when the glory of man shall fade away as the short-lived flower of the field, and when all, that is called great and honourable in princes, shall be laid low in the dust, he shall give unto his faithful servants a crown without cares, and a kingdom which cannot be moved.

PSALM III.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is said to have been composed by David, when he fled from his son Absalom. Thus circumstanced, he expresses himself in terms well adapted to the parallel case of the Son of David, persecuted by rebellious Israel; as also to that of his church, suffering tribulation in the world. 1, 2. He complains, in much anguish, of the multitude of his enemies, and of the reproaches cast upon him, as one forsaken by God; but, 3. declares, notwithstanding, his sure trust in the divine promises; 4, 5. he relates the success of his prayers, 6—8. derides the impotent malice of his enemies, and ascribes salvation to Jehovah.

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1. LORD, *how are they increased that trouble me! Many* are *they that rise up against me.*

David is astonished to find, that "the hearts of "the men of Israel are after Absalom," 2 Sam. xv. 13. that his counsellors are revolted, and his friends falling off continually; and that the king of Israel is forced to leave his capital mourning and weeping. Thus, led forth out of Jerusalem by his own children in arms against him, the holy Jesus went, forsaken and sorrowing, to the cross, in the day of trouble. Thus is the church oftentimes opposed and betrayed by her sons, and the Christian by his passions and affections. So true it is, that "a man's "foes are they of his own household." But he who by prayer engages the assistance of Jehovah, will rise superior to them all.

2. *Many* there be *which say of my soul,* There is *no help for him in* GOD.

Affliction and desertion are two very different things, but often confounded by the world. Shimei reviled David, as reprobated by heaven; and the language of the Shimeis afterward, concerning the Son of David, was, "He trusted in God; let him "deliver him now, if he will have him." See 2 Sam. xvi. 8. Matt. xxvii. 43. The fearful imaginations of our own desponding hearts, and the suggestions of our crafty adversary, frequently join to help forward this most dangerous temptation, in the hour of sorrow. What therefore hath faith to offer? We shall hear—

3. *But thou, O* LORD, art *a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head.*

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Such is the answer of David, and of all the saints, but above all, of the King of saints, to the temptation before mentioned. Jehovah is a "shield" against this, and all other fiery darts, shot by Satan and his associates: he is the "glory" of Christ and the church, with which they will one day be seen invested, though for a season it appear not to the world, any more than did the royalty of David, when, weeping and barefoot, he went up mount Olivet: 2 Sam. xv. 30. The same Jehovah is "the "lifter up of our heads," by the gift of holy confidence, and the hope of a resurrection, through that of Jesus Christ, prefigured by the triumphant and happy return of David to Jerusalem.

4. *I cried unto the* LORD *with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill.*

David driven from Jerusalem, still looked and prayed towards the "holy hill" of Sion. Christ, when a stranger on the earth, "made supplication, "with strong crying," to his Father in heaven. Christ was heard for his own sake; David was heard, and we shall be heard, through him.

5. *I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the* LORD *sustained me.*

Behold David, in the midst of danger, sleeping without fear; secure, through the divine protection, of awaking to engage and vanquish his enemies. Behold the Son of David composing himself to his rest upon the cross, that bed of sorrows; and commending his spirit into the Father's hands, in full confidence of a joyful resurrection, according to the promise, at the time appointed. Behold this, O

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Christian, and let faith teach thee how to sleep, and how to die; while it assures thee, that as sleep is a short death, so death is only a longer sleep; and that the same God watches over thee, in thy bed and in thy grave.

6. *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set* themselves *against me round about.*

Faith, revived and invigorated by prayer, and fixed on God alone, is a stranger to fear, in the worst of times. The innumerable examples of saints rescued from tribulation, and, above all, the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead, render the believer bold as a lion, although the name of his adversary be "Legion."

7. *Arise, O* LORD! *save me, O my* GOD! *for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.*

The church, through Christ, prayeth in these words of David, that Jehovah would arise, as of old time, in the power of his might; that he would finally break the power of Satan and his adherents; pluck the spoil out of the jaws of those beasts of prey; and work that glorious deliverance for the members, which is already wrought for the Head, of the body mystical.

8. *Salvation* belongeth, or, *be ascribed, unto the* LORD; *thy blessing* is, or, *be, upon thy people.*

The Psalm ends with an acknowledgement, which ought always to fill the heart, and, upon every proper occasion, to flow from the mouth of a Christian; namely, that "salvation" is not to be had from man, from the kings of the earth, or the gods of the

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heathen, from saints or angels, but from Jehovah alone; to whom alone, therefore, the glory shall be ascribed. If He will save, none can destroy; if He will destroy, none can save. Let Balak, then, curse Israel, or hire Balaam to curse them for him; be but "thy blessing," O Lord, upon thy people, and it sufficeth.

PSALM IV.

ARGUMENT.

The person speaking in this Psalm, 1. prayeth to be heard by God; 2. convinceth the world of sin; 3. declareth the righteous to be under the divine protection; 4, 5. prescribeth solitude and meditation, as the proper means to lead men to repentance and faith; 6. showeth that in God alone peace and comfort are to be found; and, 7. how superior the joys of the spirit are to those of sense; 8. reposeth himself, in full assurance of faith, on the loving kindness of the Lord.

1. *Hear me when I call, O* God *of my righteousness; thou hast enlarged me* when I was *in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.*

The church, like David, "calls" aloud, as one in great affliction, for God's assistance: she addresses him as the "God of her righteousness," as the fountain of pardon and grace; she reminds him of that spiritual liberty, and "enlargement" from bondage,

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which he had purchased for her, and oftentimes wrought in her; and, conscious of her demerits, makes her prayer for "mercy."

2. *O ye sons of men, how long* will ye turn *my glory into shame?* How long *will ye love vanity,* and *seek after leasing,* or *falsehood?*

If the Israelitish monarch conceived he had just cause to expostulate with his enemies, for despising the royal majesty with which Jehovah had invested his Anointed; of how much severer reproof shall they be thought worthy, who blaspheme the essential "glory" of King Messiah, which shines forth by his Gospel in the church? Thou, O Christ, art everlasting Truth; all is "vanity and falsehood," transient and fallacious, but the love of thee!

3. *But know that the* LORD *hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the* LORD *will hear when I call upon him.*

Be the opinions or the practices of men what they will, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. Is David "set apart" for the kingdom of Israel? Saul shall not be able to detain, nor Absalom to wrest, it from him. Is Messiah ordained to be King of the Israel of God? death and hell shall not prevent it. Are his disciples appointed to reign with him? infallibly they shall. Our intercessor is already on high; and for his sake, "the Lord will hear us "when we call upon him." What, then, can be said for us, if we neglect to call upon him?

4. *Stand in awe,* Heb. *tremble, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.*

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The enemies of Christ, as well as those of David, are here called to repentance, and the process of conversion is described. The above-mentioned consideration of the divine counsel, and the certainty of its being carried into execution, by the salvation of the righteous, and the confusion of their enemies, makes the wicked "tremble." "The fear of the "Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" it arrests the sinner in his course, and he "sins not;" he goes no farther in the way of sin, but stops, and reflects upon what he has been doing: he "communes with his "own heart upon his bed, and is still;" his conscience suffers him not to rest in the night, but takes the advantage of solitude and silence, to set before him his transgressions, with all the terrors of death and judgement; stirring him up to confess the former, and deprecate the latter, with unfeigned compunction and sorrow of heart; to turn unto the Lord, and do works meet for repentance; to learn to do good, as well as to cease from doing evil.

5. *Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the* LORD.

The Jews are no longer to offer the shadowy sacrifices of their law, since He, who is the substance of them all, is come into the world. The Gentiles are no more to offer their idolatrous sacrifices, since their idols have fallen before the cross. But returning sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, are to offer the same "sacrifices of" evangelical "righteous-"ness;" not "putting their trust" in them, but "in the Lord" Jesus, through whose spirit they are enabled to offer, and through whose blood their offer-

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ings are acceptable unto God. Faith, hope, and charity, mutually strengthen each other, and compose "a threefold cord," which is not easily broken.

6. There be *many that say, Who will show us any good?* LORD, *lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us!*

The two former verses were addressed to rebellious sinners, inviting them to repentance and reformation. This seems to relate to the righteous, who, in times of calamity and persecution, like the friends of distressed David, are tempted to despond, on seeing no end of their troubles. The Psalmist therefore prescribes prayer to all such, as an antidote against the temptation; he directs them, in the darkest night, to look towards heaven, nor doubt the return of day, when the rising sun shall diffuse light and salvation, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away. How many are continually asking the question in this verse! How few applying to Him, who alone can give an answer of peace and comfort!

7. *Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time* that *their corn and their wine increased.*

No sooner is the prayer preferred, but the answer is given; and the devout soul declares herself to experience a joy in the midst of tribulation, far superior to the joy with which men rejoice in the time of harvest, or that of vintage; a joy, bright and pure, as the regions from whence it descends. Such is the difference between the bread of earth, and that of heaven; between the juice of the grape, and the cup of salvation. Teach us, O Lord, to discern this difference, and to choose aright!

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8. *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou,* LORD, *only makest me dwell in safety.*

This conclusion affords ample matter for profitable and delightful meditation, if it be considered, first, as spoken by David, or any other believer, when lying down to rest, full of the joys of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned; secondly, as pronounced by the true David, when composing himself to his rest, in certain hope of a resurrection. And happy the Christian, who having nightly, with this verse, committed himself to his bed, as to his grave, shall at last, with the same words, resign himself to his grave, as to his bed, from which he expects in due time to arise, and sing a morning hymn, with the children of the resurrection.

PSALM V.

ARGUMENT.

The Psalmist, in affliction, 1—3. continues and resolves to continue instant in prayer; 4—6. declares the irreconcileable hatred which God bears to sin, and, 7. his own confidence of being accepted; 8. he petitions for grace to direct and preserve him in the way; 9. sets forth the wickedness of his enemies; 10. foretels their punishment, and, 11, 12. the salvation of the faithful.

1. *Give ear to my words,* O LORD, *consider my meditation,* or, *my dove-like mournings.*

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Although nothing can really hinder or divert the divine attention, yet God is represented as "not "hearing" when either the person is unacceptable, or the petition improper, or when he would thoroughly prove the faith and patience of the petitioner. Christ, the church, and the believing soul, are all in Scripture styled "doves," from their possessing the amiable properties of that bird of meekness and innocence, purity and love. "The mournings" of such are always heard and attended to in heaven.

2. *Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God: for unto thee will I pray.*

The voice of the suppliant's cry will be in proportion to the sense which he hath of his sin. Whom should a subject solicit, but his King? to whom should a sinner pray, but to his God? Let us often think upon the strong cryings of him who suffered for the sins of the world, and upon that intercession by which the pardon of those sins was procured.

3. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O* LORD; *in the morning will I direct* my prayer, *Heb. dispose,* or *set myself in order, unto* or *for thee, and will look up.*

He who is good in earnest, and hath his heart fully bent upon the work of salvation, like other skilful and diligent artificers, will be "early" in his application to it; he will get the start of the world, and take the advantage of the "sweet hour of prime," to "dispose," and "set himself in order," for the day. What is a slothful sinner to think of himself, when he reads, concerning the holy Jesus, that "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went

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"out and departed into a solitary place, and there "prayed!" Mark i. 35.

4. *For thou* art *not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

The Psalmist was encouraged to make his early prayers to God in the day of trouble, upon this consideration, that his righteous cause must finally prosper, and the divine counsels be accomplished in his exaltation, and the depression of his enemies, who were likewise the enemies of God. The same was the case and the confidence of a suffering Messiah; and such is that of his church and people in the world, where "wickedness" may prosper, and "evil" not only live, but reign. Nevertheless, we know that "God hath no pleasure" in them, nor shall they "dwell with him," as we hope to do.

5. *The foolish,* Heb. *mad, shall not stand in thy sight; for thou hatest all workers of iniquity.* 6. *Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing,* or *falsehood; the* LORD *doth abhor the blood-thirsty and deceitful man.*

No objects of the senses can be so nauseous to them, as the various kinds of sin are in the sight of God. O could we but think, as he does, concerning these, we should rather choose "madness" than transgression, and as soon fall in love with a plague-sore, as a temptation. "Falsehood, blood-thirsti-"ness, and deceitfulness," are marked out as characteristical of the enemies of David, of Christ, and the church; and history evinces them so to have been. Let us never go within the infection of such pestilential crimes.

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7. *But as for me, I will come* into *thy house in the multitude of thy mercy;* and *in thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple.*

Wisdom, righteousness, truth, mercy, and sincerity, form a character the reverse of that drawn in the preceding verses, and such an one as God will accept, when appearing before him in his house, and offering, with humility and reverence, the sacrifices of the new law, as David did those of the old, through faith in Him who alone filled up the character, and procured acceptance for believers, and their oblations.

8. *Lead me, O* LORD, *in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.*

The child of God, admitted into his holy temple, there prefers this petition, praying to be led by the divine Spirit in a course of holy obedience, all impediments being removed out of the way, which otherwise might obstruct the progress, or cause the fall, of one beginning to walk in the path of life; of one who had many "enemies" ready to contrive, to take advantage of, to rejoice and triumph in, his ruin. Thus a man's enemies, while they oblige him to pray more fervently, and to watch more narrowly over his conduct, oftentimes become his best friends.

9. *For* there is *no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part* is *very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*

A part of this verse is cited, Rom. iii. 13. together with several other passages from the Psalms and Pro-

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phets, to evince the depravity of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, till justified by faith, and renewed by grace. It is plain, therefore, that the description was designed for others, besides the enemies of the literal David, and is of more general import, reaching to the world of the ungodly, and to the enemies of all righteousness, as manifested in the person of Messiah, and in his church. The charge brought against these is, that "truth" and "fidelity" were not to be found in their dealings with God or each other; that their "inward parts" were very wickedness; their first thoughts and imaginations were defiled, and the stream was poisoned at the fountain; that their "throat was an open sepulchre," continually emitting, in obscene and impious language, the noisome and infectious exhalations of a putrid heart, entombed in a body of sin; and that, if ever they put on the appearance of goodness, they "flattered "with their tongue," in order the more effectually to deceive and destroy. So low is human nature fallen! "O thou Adam, what hast thou done? For though "it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, "but we all that come of thee." 2 Esd. vii. 48.

10. *Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels: cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee.*

Concerning passages of this imprecatory kind in the book of Psalms, it is to be observed, that they are not spoken of private and personal enemies, but of the opposers of God and his anointed; nor of any among these, but the irreclaimable and finally impe-

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nitent; and this by way of prediction, rather than imprecation; which would appear, if the original verbs were translated uniformly in the future tense, as they might be, and indeed, to cut off all occasion from them which desire it, should be translated. The verse before us would then run thus—"Thou wilt "destroy them, O God; they shall perish by their "own counsels: thou wilt cast them out in the mul-"titude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled "against thee." The words, when rendered in this form, contain a prophecy of the infatuation, rejection, and destruction of such as should obstinately persevere in their opposition to the counsels of heaven, whether relating to David, to Christ, or to the church. The fate of Ahithophel and Absalom, of Judas and the Jews, should warn others not to offend after the same example.

11. *But let all those that trust in thee rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.* Heb. *All they that trust in thee* shall *rejoice, &c.*

As the last verse foretold the perdition of the ungodly, this describes the felicity of the saints; who, trusting in God, rejoice evermore, and sing aloud in the church the praises of their Saviour and mighty defender; the love of whose name fills their hearts with joy unspeakable, while they experience the comforts of grace, and expect the rewards of glory.

12. *For thou,* LORD, *wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as* with *a shield.*

The "blessing" of God descends upon us through Jesus Christ "the righteous," or "just one," as of

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old it did upon Israel through David, whom, for the benefit of his chosen, God protected, delivered, and placed upon the throne. Thou, O Christ, art the righteous Saviour, thou art the King of Israel, thou art the blessed of Jehovah, the fountain of blessing to all believers, and thy "favour" is the defence and protection to the church militant.

FIRST DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM VI.

ARGUMENT.

This is the first of those Psalms which are styled penitential. It contains, 1. a deprecation of eternal vengeance, and 2, 3. a petition for pardon; which is enforced from the consideration of the penitent's sufferings; 4. from that of the divine mercy; 5. from that of the praise and glory which God would fail to receive, if man were destroyed; 6, 7. from that of the penitent's humiliation and contrition: 8—10. the strain changes into one of joy and triumph, upon the success and return of the prayer.

1. O LORD, *rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*

Let us suppose a sinner awakened to a true sense of his condition, and looking around him for help. Above is an angry God preparing to take vengeance; beneath, the fiery gulf ready to receive him; with-

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out him, a world in flames; within, the gnawing worm. Thus situated, he begins, in extreme agony of spirit, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger; "neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure." He expects that God will "rebuke" him, but only prays that it may not be "in anger" finally to destroy him; he desires to be chastened, but chastened in fatherly love, not in the "hot displeasure" of an inexorable judge. As often as we are led thus to express our sense of sin, and dread of punishment, let us reflect on Him, whose righteous soul, endued with a sensibility peculiar to itself, sustained the sins of the world, and the displeasure of the Father.

2. *Have mercy upon me,* O LORD, *for I am weak: O* LORD, *heal me; for my bones are vexed,* Heb. *shaken,* or, *made to tremble.*

The penitent entreats for mercy, first, by representing his pitiable case, under the image of sickness. He describes his soul as deprived of all its health and vigour, as languishing and fainting, by reason of sin, which had eat out the vitals, and shaken all the powers and supporters of the spiritual frame, so that the breath of life seemed to be departing. Enough however was left, to supplicate the healing aid of the God of mercy and comfort; to petition for oil and wine at the hands of the Physician of spirits. How happy is it for us, that we have a physician, who cannot but be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, seeing that he himself once took them upon him, and suffered for them, even unto the death of the cross, under which he "fainted," and on which "his bones were vexed!"

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3. *My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O* LORD, *how long?*

Another argument is drawn from the sense which the penitent hath of this his woful condition, and the consternation and anxiety produced thereby in his troubled mind. These cause him to fly for refuge to the hope set before him. "Hope deferred maketh "the heart sick;" he is therefore beautifully represented as crying out, with a fond and longing impatience, "But thou, O Lord, how long?" His strength is supposed to fail him, and the sentence is left imperfect. What, blessed Jesus, were thy "troubles," when to thy companions thou saidst, "My "soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death?" By those thy sorrows we beseech thee to hear the voice of thine afflicted church, crying to thee from the earth, "My soul also is sore troubled; but thou, O "Lord, how long?"

4. *Return, O* LORD, *deliver my soul: Oh, save me for thy mercies' sake.*

A third argument is formed upon the consideration of God's "mercy;" for the sake of which, as it is promised to penitents, he is requested to "return," or to turn himself towards the suppliant; to lift up his countenance on the desponding heart; to "deliver" it from darkness and the shadow of death, and to diffuse around it light and life, salvation, joy, and gladness, like the sun in the morning, when he revisits a benighted world, and calls up the creation to bless the Maker of so glorious a luminary, so bright a representative of redeeming love.

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5. *For in death* there is *no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?*

The fourth argument proceeds upon a supposition, that God created man for his own glory, which, therefore, would be so far diminished, if man were permitted finally to perish. The body could not glorify God, unless raised from the dead, nor could the soul, if left in hell. The voice of thanksgiving is not heard in the grave, and no hallelujahs are sung in the pit of destruction. This plea, now urged by the church, was urged for her without all doubt by her Saviour in his devotions, and prevailed in his mouth, as, through him, it will do in hers.

6. *I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.*

The penitent is supplied with a fifth argument, by the signs and fruits of a sincere repentance, which put forth themselves in him. Such was his sorrow, and such revenge did he take upon himself, that for every idle word he now poured forth a groan, like him that is in anguish through extremity of bodily pain, until he was "weary," but yet continued groaning; while the sad remembrance of each wanton folly drew a tear from the fountains of grief. The all-righteous Saviour himself wept over sinners; sinners read the story, and yet return again to their sins!

7. *Mine eye is consumed because of grief: it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.*

Grief exhausts the animal spirits, dims the eyes,

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and brings on old age before its time. Thus it is said, concerning the man of sorrows, that "many "were astonished at him, his visage was so marred "more than any man, and his form more than the "sons of men:" Isa. lii. 14. How long, in these times, might youth and beauty last, were godly sorrow their only enemy!

8. *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, for the* LORD *hath heard the voice of my weeping.* 9. *The* LORD *hath heard my supplication; the* LORD *will hear,* or, *hath heard, my prayer.*

Repentance, having performed her task, having taught her votary to forsake sin, and to renounce all communication with sinners, now gives place to faith, which appears with the glad tidings of pardon and acceptance, causing the penitent to rejoice in God his Saviour, with joy unspeakable; and inspiring his heart with vigour and resolution to run his course in the way of righteousness. Risen to newness of life, he defies the malice, and predicts the final overthrow, of his spiritual adversaries.

10. *Let all mine enemies,* or, *all mine enemies shall, be ashamed, and sore vexed: let them,* or, *they shall, return,* and *be ashamed suddenly.*

Many of the mournful Psalms end in this manner, to instruct the believer, that he is continually to look forward, and solace himself with beholding that day, when his warfare shall be accomplished; when sin and sorrow shall be no more; when sudden and everlasting confusion shall cover the enemies of righteousness; when the sackcloth of the penitent shall be exchanged for a robe of glory, and every tear

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become a sparkling gem in his crown; when to sighs and groans shall succeed the songs of heaven, set to angelic harps, and faith shall be resolved into the vision of the Almighty.

PSALM VII.

ARGUMENT.

David is said to have composed this Psalm concerning the words, or the matter, of Cush the Benjamite. Whether Saul, or Shimei, or any one else, be intended under this name, it is sufficiently clear, that David had been maliciously aspersed and calumniated by such a person; that the Psalm was written to vindicate himself from the imputation, whatever was the nature of it; and, consequently, may be considered as the true appeal of the true David and his disciples, against the grand Accuser and his associates. The person speaking, 1, 2. declares his trust to be in God; 3—5. protests his innocence; 6—8. desires that judgement may be given in the cause; 9, 10. prays for the abolition of sin, and the full establishment of righteousness; 11—13. sets forth the divine judgements against sinners; 14—16. describes the beginning, progress, and end, of sin, with, 17. the joy and triumph of the faithful.

1. *O* Lord *my God, in thee do I put my trust; save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:*

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To a tender and ingenuous spirit, the "persecu-"tion" of the tongue is worse than that of the sword, and with more difficulty submitted to; as indeed a good name is more precious than bodily life. Believers in every age have been persecuted in this way; and the King of saints often mentions it as one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup of sorrows. Faith and prayer are the arms with which this formidable temptation must be encountered, and may be overcome. The former assures us, that God can "save and deliver" us from it; the latter induces him so to do.

2. *Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.*

The "lion" of whom David stood in fear, was probably Saul, roused, by a false accusation, to destroy him. The rage of tyrants is often in the same manner excited against the church. And we all have reason to dread the fury of one who is "the roaring "lion," as well as the "accuser of the brethren." From him none can deliver us, but God only.

3. *O* Lord *my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;*

David makes a solemn appeal to God, the searcher of hearts, to judge of his innocence, with regard to the particular crime laid to his charge. Any person, when slandered, may do the same. But Christ only could call upon Heaven to attest his universal uprightness. In his "hands" there was "no iniquity;" all his works were wrought in perfect righteousness; and when the prince of this world came to try and explore him, he found nothing whereof justly to ac-

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cuse him. The vessel was thoroughly shaken, but the liquor in it continued pure.

4. *If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me: yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:*

David probably alludes to the life of Saul, which was twice preserved by him, when he had been pressed by his attendants to embrace the opportunity of taking it away. See 1 Sam. xxiv. xxvi. Of the Son of David, St. Paul says, "In this he commended his love to us, that when we were sinners, he died for us:" Rom. v. 8. In so exalted a sense did he "deliver him that without cause was his enemy." Wretched they who persecute their benefactor; happy he who can reflect, that he has been a benefactor to his persecutors.

5. *Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust.*

These are the evils which David imprecates on himself, if he were such as his adversaries represented him; persecution, apprehension, death, and disgrace. Christ, for our sakes, submitting to the imputation of guilt, suffered all these; but, being innocent in himself, he triumphed over them all; he was raised and released, glorified and adored; he pursued and overtook his enemies, he conquered the conquerors, and trampled them under his feet; and he enabled us, through grace, to do the same.

6. *Arise, O* LORD, *in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies; and awake for me to the judgment* that *thou hast commanded.*

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To a protestation of innocence succeeds a prayer for judgement upon the case, which is formed on these two considerations; first, the unreasonable and unrelenting fury of the persecutors; secondly, the justice which God has "commanded" others to execute, and which therefore he himself will doubtless execute upon such occasions. How did he "awake," and "arise," and "lift up himself to judgement" on the behalf of his Anointed, in the day of the resurrection of Jesus, and the subsequent confusion of his enemies! And let injured innocence ever comfort itself with the remembrance of another day to come, when every earth-born cloud being removed, it shall dazzle its oppressors with a lustre far superior to that of the noon-day sun.

7. *So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.*

The meaning is, that a visible display of God's righteous judgement would induce multitudes who should behold, or hear of it, to adore and glorify him. For their sakes, therefore, as well as that of the sufferer, he is entreated to re-ascend the tribunal as formerly, and pronounce the wished-for sentence. Thus the determination of the cause between Jesus and his adversaries, by his resurrection, and "return "on high," brought "the congregation of the nations" around him, and effected the conversion of the world. Nor, in human affairs, does any thing more advance the reputation of a people among their neighbours, than an equitable sentence in the mouth of him who sitteth in judgement.

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8. *The* LORD *shall judge the people: judge me, O* LORD, *according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity* that is *in me.*

Conscious of his "righteousness" and "integrity," as to the matter in question, David desires to be judged by him who is to judge the world at the last day. How few, among Christians, have seriously and deliberately considered, whether the sentence of that day is likely to be in their favour! Yet, how many, with the utmost composure and self-complacency, repeat continually the words of this Psalm, as well as those in the *Te Deum*, "We believe that "thou shalt come to be our judge!" Legal, or perfect righteousness and integrity, are peculiar to the Redeemer; but evangelical righteousness and integrity all must have, who would be saved.

9. *Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just:* or, *the wickedness of the wicked shall,* &c.: *for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.* 10. *My defence is of God, who saveth the upright in heart.*

It is predicted, that wickedness will, in the end, be abolished, and the just immoveably established, by Him who knoweth intimately the very thoughts and desires of both good and bad men, and will give to each their due reward. How can we doubt of this, when it has pleased God to afford so many examples and preludes to it, in his dispensations of old time? The righteous cause hath already triumphed in Christ; let us not doubt, but that it will do so in the church. Happy the man, whose hope is therefore in God, because "he saveth the upright in heart."

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11. *God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry* with the wicked *every day.*

The sense seems to be, that there are daily instances in the world of God's favour towards his people; as also of his displeasure against the ungodly, who are frequently visited by sore judgements, and taken away in their sins. In this light we should consider and regard all history, whether that of our own age and nation, or of any other.

12. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.* 13. *He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.*

The sinner who is not converted by the vengeance inflicted on others, will himself at length be made an example of. The wrath of God may be slow, but it is always sure. In thoughtless security man wantons and whiles away the precious hours; he knows not that every transgression sets a fresh edge on the sword, which is thus continually whetting for his destruction; nor considers, that he is the mark of an archer who never errs, and who, at this very instant, perhaps has fitted to the string that arrow which is to pierce his soul with everlasting anguish.

14. *Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.*

This is not to be understood as if "travail" were previous to "conception." The first is a general expression, "Behold, he travaileth with iniquity:" the latter part of the verse is more particular; as if it had been said, "and having conceived mischief, he "bringeth forth falsehood." When an evil thought is

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instilled into the heart of a man, then the seed of the wicked one is sown; by admitting, retaining, and cherishing the diabolical suggestion in his mind, he "conceiveth" a purpose of "mischief;" when that purpose is gradually formed and matured for the birth, he "travaileth with iniquity;" at length, by carrying it into action, he "bringeth forth false-"hood." The purity of the soul, like that of the body, from whence the image is borrowed, must be preserved by keeping out of the way of temptation.

15. *He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch* which *he made.* 16. *His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.*

All the world agrees to acknowledge the equity of that sentence which inflicts upon the guilty the punishment intended by them for the innocent. No one pities the fate of a man buried in that pit which he had dug to receive his neighbour; or of him who owes his death-wound to the return of an arrow shot against heaven. Saul was overthrown by those Philistines whom he would have made the instruments of cutting off David. Haman was hanged on his own gallows. The Jews, who excited the Romans to crucify Christ, were themselves, by the Romans, crucified in crowds. Striking instances these of the vengeance to be one day executed on all tempters and persecutors of others; when men and angels shall lift up their voices, and cry out together, "Righteous art thou, O LORD, and just are thy "judgements."

17. *I will praise the* LORD *according to his righ-*

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teousness; and will sing praise to the name of the LORD *most high.*

Whatever doubts may at present arise concerning the ways of God, let us rest assured that they will all receive a solution; and that the "righteousness" of the great Judge, manifested in his final determinations, will be the subject of everlasting hallelujahs.

PSALM VIII.

ARGUMENT.

This is the first of those Psalms which the Church has appointed to be read on Ascension-day. It treats, as appears from Heb. ii. 6, &c. of the wonderful love of God, shown by the exaltation of our nature in Messiah, or the second Adam, to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and by the subjection of all creatures to the word of his power.

1. *O* LORD, *our Lord, how excellent* is *thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*

The Prophet beholds in spirit the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; like St. Stephen afterward, he sees heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; the sight fills his heart with wonder, love, and devotion, which break forth in this address to "Jehovah," as "our Lord;" for such he is by the twofold right of creation and redemption, having made us, and purchased us. On

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both accounts, "how excellent," how full of beauty and honour, is his name, diffused by the Gospel through "all the earth!" But more especially do men and angels admire and adore him for the exaltation of his "glory," the glory of the only begotten, high "above the heavens," and all created nature, to the throne prepared for him before the foundation of the world.

2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained,* Heb. *founded,* or *constituted, strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

This verse is cited by our Lord, Matt. xxii. 16. and applied to "little children in the temple, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" which vexed and confounded his malignant adversaries. The import of the words, therefore, plainly is, that the praises of Messiah, celebrated in the church by his children, have in them a strength and power which nothing can withstand; they can abash infidelity, when at its greatest height, and strike hell itself dumb. In the citation made by our Lord, which the Evangelist gives from the Greek of the LXX, we read, "thou hast perfected praise," which seems to be rather a paraphrase than a translation of the Hebrew, literally rendered by our translators, "thou hast ordained "strength."

3. *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

At the time of inditing this Psalm, David is evi-

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dently supposed to have had before his eyes the heavens as they appear by night. He is struck with the awful magnificence of the wide-extended firmament, adorned by the moon walking in brightness, and rendered brilliant by the vivid lustre of a multitude of shining orbs, differing from each other in magnitude and splendour. And when, from surveying the beauty of heaven, with its glorious show, he turns to take a view of the creature man, he is still more affected by the mercy, than he had before been by the majesty, of the Lord; since far less wonderful it is, that God should make such a world as this, than that He, who made such a world as this, should be "mindful of man," in this fallen estate, and should "visit" human nature with his salvation.

5. *For thou hast made him a little,* or, *for a little while, lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.* 6. *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all* things *under his feet.*

On these two verses, with that preceding, St. Paul has left the following comment: "One in a certain place TESTIFIETH, saying, What is man, that "thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that "thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower "than [*marg.* a little while inferior to] the angels; "thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and "didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou "hast put all things in subjection under his feet. "For in that he put all in subjection under him, "he left nothing that is not put under him. But "NOW we see not YET all things put under him.

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"But we see JESUS, who was made a little lower "than the angels, for the suffering of death, "crowned with glory and honour." Heb. ii. 6, &c. See also 1 Cor. xv. 27.

7. *All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;* 8. *The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,* and whatsoever *passeth through the paths of the sea.*

Adam, upon his creation, was invested with sovereign dominion over the creatures, in words of the same import with these; Gen. i. 28. which are therefore here used, and the creatures particularised, to inform us, that what the first Adam lost by transgression, the second Adam regained by obedience. That "glory" which was "set above the heavens," could not but be over all things on "the earth." And accordingly, we hear our Lord saying, after his resurrection, "All power is given unto me in heaven "and in earth:" Matt. xxviii. 18. Nor is it a speculation unpleasing, or unprofitable, to consider, that he who rules over the material world, is Lord also of the intellectual, or spiritual creation, represented thereby. The souls of the faithful, lowly and harmless, are the sheep of his pasture; those who, like oxen, are strong to labour in the church, and who, by expounding the word of life, tread out the corn for the nourishment of the people, own him for their kind and beneficent Master; nay, tempers fierce and untractable as the wild beasts of the desert, are yet subject to his will; spirits of the angelic kind, that, like the bird of the air, traverse freely the superior region, move at his command; and those evil ones, whose habitation is in the deep abyss, even to the

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great Leviathan himself; all, all, are put under the feet of king Messiah; who, "because he humbled "himself, and became obedient unto death, even the "death of the cross, was therefore highly exalted, "and had a name given him above every name, that "at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, whe-"ther of things in heaven, or things on earth, or "things under the earth; and that every tongue "should confess that JESUS is LORD, to the glory of "God the Father. Phil. ii. 8, &c.

9. *O* LORD, *our Lord, how excellent* is *thy name in all the earth!*

Let therefore the universal chorus of men and angels join their voices together, and make their sound to be heard as one, in honour of the Redeemer, evermore praising him, and saying, O LORD, our Lord Jesu Christ, King of Righteousness, Peace, and Glory, King of kings, and Lord of lords, how excellent, how precious, how lovely, how great and glorious is thy Name, diffused over all the earth, for the salvation of thy chosen! Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And let heaven and earth say, AMEN.

SECOND DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM IX.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm consists of two parts, a thanksgiving, 1—12. and a prayer, 13—20. Upon what par-

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ticular occasion it was composed, is not known; probably to celebrate the victories gained by David over the neighbouring nations, after God had exalted him to be king in Sion. See ver. 11. But most certainly the Psalm was intended for the use of the Christian Church; and she continually, by using it, 1, 2. declares her resolution to celebrate the praises of her God; since, 3, 4. her enemies were vanquished, and her cause was carried; 5, 6. the empire of Satan was subverted, and, 7, 8. the kingdom of Christ established; 9, 10. affording to believers refuge and salvation. For all these blessings, 11. Christians are excited to praise their Redeemer, who, 12. forgets nothing that is done or suffered for his sake. 13, 14. The Church petitions for final deliverance from the world, and the evil thereof; 15, 16. building her hope upon the mercies already received, 17, 18. she foretels the destruction of the wicked; and, 19, 20. prays for the manifestation of God.

1. *I will praise* thee, *O* LORD, *with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvellous works.*

In this animated and exalted hymn, the church begins with declaring her resolution to "praise Je-"hovah," as the author of her salvation; and that, neither coldly, as if the salvation were little worth; nor partially, reserving a share of the glory of it to

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herself; but with the "whole heart," with an affection pure and flaming, like the holy fire upon the altar. She is determined to "show forth" to the world, for its conviction and conversion, "all his "marvellous works," the most "marvellous" of which are those wrought for, and in, the souls of men. Outward miracles strike more forcibly upon the senses; but they are introductory only to those internal operations, which they are intended to represent.

2. *I will be glad and rejoice in thee; I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.*

Christians are taught to "be glad and rejoice," not in abundance of wealth, or plenitude of power, not in the pleasures of sense, or the praise of men, but in God their Saviour; and their joy is as far superior to the joy of the worldly, as the object of one is to that of the other. He who, with the spirit and the understanding, as well as with the voice, "sings praise to thy name, O most High," is employed as the angels are, and experiences a foretaste of the delight they feel.

3. *When mine enemies are driven back, they shall fall,* or, *they stumble,* or *fall, and perish at thy presence.*

The church begins to explain the subject of her joy, which is a victory over her "enemies;" a victory not gained by herself, but by the "presence of God" in the midst of her. The grand enemy of our salvation was first vanquished by Christ in the wilderness, and "driven back," with the words "Get thee be-"hind me, Satan." The same blessed person after-

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wards completely triumphed over him upon the cross, when "the prince of this world was cast out." This is that great victory, which we celebrate in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, from generation to generation; and, through faith in him who achieved it, we likewise are enabled to fight and to overcome.

4. *For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou sattest in the throne judging right.*

The same important transaction is here described in forensic, as before it was in military terms. Satan having gotten possession of mankind, might have pleaded his right to keep it, since by transgression they have left God, and sold themselves to him. But Christ, as the church's representative and advocate, made the satisfaction required, paid down the price of redemption, "took the prey from the mighty, "and delivered the lawful captive:" Isa. xlix. 24. Thus was our "right and our cause maintained;" thus we were rescued from the oppressor, and he who "sat on the throne judged righteous judgement." Something of this sort may be supposed to pass, concerning each individual, between the Accuser of the brethren and the eternal Intercessor, in the court of heaven.

5. *Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.*

To the victory of Christ succeeded the overthrow of Satan's empire in the pagan world. "The hea-"then were rebuked," when, through the power of the Spirit, in those who preached the Gospel, men were convinced of sin, and of righteousness, and of

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judgement; "the wicked were destroyed, and their "name put out for ever," when the Roman power became Christian, and the ancient idolatry sunk, to rise no more. A day is coming when all iniquity shall perish and be forgotten in like manner.

6. *O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end,* or, *The destructions of the enemy are completed to the utmost: and thou, O* God, *hast destroyed their cities, their memorial is perished with them* * !

The Christian church, when repeating these words, may be supposed to take a retrospective view of the successive fall of those empires with their capital "cities," in which the "enemy" had from time to time fixed his residence, and which had vexed and persecuted the people of God in different ages. Such were the Assyrian, or Babylonian, the Persian, and the Grecian monarchies. All these vanished away, and came to nothing. Nay, the very "memorial" of the stupendous Nineveh and Babylon is so "pe-"rished with them," that the place where they once stood is now no more to be found. The Roman empire was the last of the pagan persecuting powers; and when the church saw "that" under her feet, well might she cry out, "The destructions "of the enemy are completed to the utmost!" How lovely will this song be, in the day when the last

* Bishop Lowth renders this verse to the same effect. "De-"solations have consumed the enemy for ever; and as to the "cities which thou, *O God,* hast destroyed, their memory is "perished with them." See Merrick's Annotations on the Psalms, p. 9.

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enemy shall be destroyed, and the world itself shall become what Babylon is at present! Next to the glory and triumph of that day, is the jubilee which the Christian celebrates, upon his conquest over the body of sin.

7. *But the* LORD *shall endure for ever; he hath prepared his throne for judgement.* 8. *And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgement to the people in uprightness.*

In opposition to the transient nature of earthly kingdoms, the eternal duration of Messiah's kingdom is asserted; as also its universality, extending over the whole "world;" together with the consummate rectitude of its administration. To him, as supreme judge in an unerring court of equity, lies an appeal from the unjust determinations here below: and by him in person shall every cause be reheard, when that court shall sit, and all nations shall be summoned to appear before it.

9. *The* LORD *also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.*

In the mean time, and until he returneth to judgement, the poor in spirit, the meek and lowly penitent, however "oppressed in times of trouble," by worldly and ungodly men, and by the frequent assaults of the wicked one, still finds a refuge in Jesus; who renews his strength by fresh supplies of grace, arms him with faith and patience, and animates him with the hope of glory.

10. *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou,* LORD, *hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*

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Therefore, they who "know God's name," that is, who are acquainted with, and have experienced, his merciful nature and disposition, expressed in that name, will take no unlawful methods to escape affliction, nor "put their trust" in any but "him," for deliverance; since a most undoubted truth (and, O what a comfortable truth!) it is, that "thou, Lord "Jesus, hast not forsaken," nor ever wilt finally "forsake, them that" sincerely and diligently, with their whole heart, "seek" to "thee" for help; as a child, upon apprehension of danger, flies to the arms of its tender and indulgent parent.

11. *Sing praises to the* LORD *which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.*

The church, having celebrated the power and the goodness of her Lord, exhorteth all her children to lift up their voices, and sing together, in full chorus, the praises of him whose tabernacle is in "Zion," who resides with men, upon the mountain of his holiness, and saith, "Behold, I am with you always, "even to the end of the world." And thus, not only "among the people," but also to principalities and powers in heavenly places, will be "declared" and made known by the voice of thanksgiving in the church, the manifold wisdom and mercy of God, in his "doings" towards man. See Ephes. iii. 10.

12. *When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them, and forgetteth not the cry of the humble.*

An objection might be started to the so much extolled loving-kindness of God, namely, that in this world his faithful people are often afflicted and per-

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secuted; nay, sometimes suffered to be killed all the day long, as sheep appointed to the slaughter. But this is obviated by the consideration, that all is not over, as wicked men may suppose, at death; that a strict "inquisition" will be appointed hereafter, when the "blood" of martyrs and the sufferings of confessors shall not be "forgotten." He remembereth "THEM," that is, those who seek him, mentioned verse 10; so that the exhortation to "sing praises," &c. ver. 11. seems parenthetic.

13. *Have mercy upon me, O* LORD, *consider the trouble* which I suffer *of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.*

We are now come to the second part of the Psalm. The church, after having, in the former part, strengthened her faith by commemoration of the mighty works God had wrought for her, proceeds, in this, to pour forth a prayer for farther and final deliverance. She speaks, as still militant upon earth, still in an enemy's country, surrounded by them that hate her, and suffering much from them. To whom therefore should she address herself, but to him whose high prerogative it is, literally to "raise from the "gates of death;" to him who is, in every possible sense, "the resurrection and the life?"

14. *That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.*

The members of the church militant despair of being able to "show forth all God's praise," till they become members of the church triumphant. There is a beautiful contrast between "the gates of death,"

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in the preceding verse, and "the gates of the daugh-
"ter of Zion," or the heavenly Jerusalem, in this: the one lead down to the pit, the other up to the mount of God; the one open into perpetual darkness, the other into light eternal; from the one proceeds nothing but what is evil, from the other nothing but what is good; infernal spirits watch at the one, the other are unbarred by the hands of angels. What a blessing then is it, to be snatched from the former, and transported to the latter! Who but must "rejoice" in such "salvation?"

15. *The heathen are sunk,* or *sink, down in the pit* that *they made; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.* 16. *The* LORD *is known* by *the judgement* which *he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.*

Faith beholds, as already executed, that righteous judgement, whereby wicked men and evil spirits will fall into the perdition which they had prepared for others, either openly by persecution, or more covertly by temptation. See Ps. vii. 15, 16.

17. *The wicked shall be turned into hell,* and *all the nations that forget God.*

All wickedness came originally with the wicked one from hell; thither it will be again remitted, and they who hold on its side must accompany it on its return to that place of torment, there to be shut up for ever. The true state both of "nations," and the individuals of which they are composed, is to be estimated from one single circumstance, namely, whether in their doings they remember or "forget God."

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Remembrance of Him is the well-spring of virtue; forgetfulness of Him, the fountain of vice.

18. *For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.*

They who remember God shall infallibly be remembered by Him; and let this be their anchor, in the most tempestuous seasons. The body of a martyr is buried in the earth; and so is the root of the fairest flower; but neither of them "perisheth for ever." Let but the winter pass and the spring return, and, lo, the faded and withered flower blooms; the body sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, rises in incorruption, glory, and power.

19. *Arise, O* LORD, *let not men prevail; let the heathen be judged in thy sight.*

And now, the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; Arise, O Lord Jesu, from thy throne of glory, and come quickly; "let not" the "man" of sin "prevail" against thy church; but let the long depending cause between her and her adversaries, "be judged" and finally determined "in thy sight."

20. *Put them in fear, O* LORD; that *the nations may know themselves* to be but *men.*

Strange, that man, dust in his original, sinful by his fall, and continually reminded of both by every thing in him and about him, should yet stand in need of some sharp affliction, some severe visitation from God, to bring him to the knowledge of himself, and make him feel, who, and what he is. But this is frequently the case; and when it is, as there are wounds which cannot be healed without a previous

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application of caustics, mercy is necessitated to begin her work with an infliction of judgement.

PSALM X.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is, in the LXX, joined to the preceding, but, in the Hebrew, divided from it. The church, under persecution from the spirit of antichrist in the world, after, 1. an humble expostulation with her Lord, setteth down the marks whereby that spirit may be known; such as, 2. hatred of the faithful; 3. self-willedness and worldly-mindedness; 4. infidelity; 5, 6. profligacy and pride; 7. profaneness and perjury; 8—10. subtilty and treachery employed against the people of God; 11. security and presumption. From the persecutions of such a spirit the church, 12—15. prayeth earnestly to be delivered; and, 16—18. through faith, rejoiceth in tribulation.

1. *Why standest thou afar off, O* LORD? why *hidest thou* thyself *in times of trouble?*

During the conflict between the church and her adversaries, God is represented as one withdrawing to a distance, instead of affording succour; nay, as one concealing himself, so as not to be found by those who petitioned for aid, or counsel. To behold the righteous cause oppressed, and good men seem-

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ingly deserted by heaven, at a time when they most need its assistance, is apt to offend the weak, and oftentimes stagger those who are strong. It is indeed a sore trial, but intended to make us perfect in the practice of three most important duties, humility, resignation, and faith. That we may not faint under the severity of this discipline, let us ever bear in mind, that the beloved Son of the Father, the Son in whom he was well pleased, had once occasion to utter these words, "My God, my God, why hast "thou forsaken me?"

2. *The wicked in* his *pride doth persecute the poor; let them,* or *they shall, be taken in the devices that they have imagined.*

Inconceivable is that malignant fury, with which a conceited infidel persecutes an humble believer, though that believer hath no otherwise offended him than by being such. And what wonder? since it is a copy of the hatred which Satan bears to Christ. But the devices of the adversaries, like those of their leader, will end in their own eternal confusion.

3. *For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous* whom *the* LORD *abhorreth.*

The first part of this verse points out that alarming symptom of a reprobate mind, a disposition to exult and glory in those lusts, which are the shame and disgrace of human nature, whether the world or the flesh be their object. The latter clause is differently rendered, as implying either that "the wicked "blesseth the covetous, whom God abhorreth," or that "the wicked, being covetous, or oppressive, "blesseth himself and abhorreth God." Either way,

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an oppressing, griping, worldly spirit is characterized, with its direct opposition to the spirit of God, which teaches, that sin is to be confessed with shame and sorrow; that in God alone man is to make his boast; and that it is more blessed to give, than to receive.

4. *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek* after God; *God* is *not in all his thoughts*; or, *all his imaginations are, There is no God.*

The counsels of heaven are not known by the wicked, because they are not sought after; and they are not sought after, because of a diabolical self-sufficiency, which, having taken possession of the heart, displays itself in the countenance, and reigns throughout the man. He wants no Prophet to teach him, no Priest to atone for him, no King to conduct him; he needs neither a Christ to redeem, nor a Spirit to sanctify him; he believes no Providence, adores no Creator, and fears no Judge. Thus he lives a "stranger from the covenants of "promise, and without God in the world." Ephes. ii. 12. O that this character now existed only in the Psalmist's description!

5. *His ways are always grievous,* or, *corrupt; thy judgements* are *far above out of his sight;* as for *all his enemies, he puffeth at them.*

As are a man's principles, such will be his practices; and if he hath not God in his thoughts, his course of life will be corrupt and abominable, his end, his means, and his motives being all wrong, and polluted with concupiscence. There would have

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been some chance of holding him by fear, but that is gone with his faith; for no man can tremble at judgements in which he does not believe.

6. *He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved; for* I shall *never* be *in adversity.*

Prosperity begets presumption; and he who has been long accustomed to see his designs succeed, begins to think it impossible they should ever do otherwise. The long-suffering of God, instead of leading such an one to repentance, only hardens him in his iniquity. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, he thinks it will not be executed at all. He vaunteth himself, therefore, like the proud Chaldean monarch, in the Babylon which he hath erected, and fondly pronounceth it to be immortal. Such, it is too evident, are often the vain imaginations of triumphant wickedness.

7. *His mouth is full of cursing, deceit, and fraud; under his tongue* is *mischief and vanity.*

From the thoughts of the sinner's "heart," mentioned in the preceding verse, David goes on to describe the words of his "mouth." And here we may illustrate the character of antichrist, by setting that of Christ in opposition to it. The mouth of one poureth forth a torrent of curses and lies; from that of the other flowed a clear and copious stream of benediction and truth. Under the serpentine tongue of the former is a bag of mischief and vanity; but honey and milk were under the tongue of the latter, so pleasant and so nourishing to the spirits of men were all his communications.

8. *He sitteth in the lurking-places of the vil-*

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lages; in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

From "words," the description proceeds to "actions." And with regard to these, as the Son of God went publicly preaching through cities and villages to save men's lives, so this child of Satan lieth in ambush to destroy them, privily bringing into the church, and diffusing among the people, pestilent errors, and damnable heresies, for that purpose.

9. *He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.*

The disciples of Jesus, like their blessed Master, are ever vigilant to catch men in the evangelical net, in order to draw them from the world to God; the partisans of Satan, in imitation of their leader, are employed in watching, from their lurking places, the footsteps of the Christian pilgrim, that they may spring upon him in an unguarded moment, and draw him from God to the world, and from thence to the devil.

10. *He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.*

Our Lord, who is styled "the Lion of the tribe "of Judah," became a "Lamb," for the salvation of mankind: but when his adversary at any time "humbleth" himself, when the wolf appears in sheep's clothing, let the flock beware; it is for their more effectual destruction. And if, allured by an outward show of moderation and benevolence, the simple ones shall venture themselves within his reach,

they will soon find that his nature is disguised, but not altered.

11. *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten; he hideth his face, he will never see* it.

For the chastisement of his people, God often suffers the enemy to prevail and prosper, who then ridicules the faith and hope of the church, and solaces himself in the conceit, that if there be a God, he either knows not, or cares not, what is done upon earth. These Epicurean notions, however absurd and unworthy of the Deity they may seem, do yet in some measure take possession of every man's mind at the instant of his committing a sin; since it is most certain, that, with a due impression of the divine omniscience upon his soul at the time, he would not commit it, for all that the tempter could offer him. But faith is apt to sleep, and then sin awakes.

12. *Arise, O* LORD; *O God, lift up thine hand; forget not the humble.* 13. *Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require* it.

The church now prays, that Jehovah, in vindication of his own honour and attributes, would arise to judgement, and make bare his glorious arm for the defence of his elect, who cry day and night unto him. Thus would the insolence of the wicked one and his agents, founded on the divine forbearance, be repressed, and all the world would see, that God had not forgotten, but still, as ever, remembered and regarded the low estate of his handmaid.

14. *Thou hast seen* it, *for thou beholdest mischief*

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and spite, to requite it with thine hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

"The wicked," above, "saith in his heart, Thou "wilt not requite it." But the faithful are taught other things by the promises in Scripture, and the experience of unnumbered histories. They know assuredly, that God beholds all that travail and vexation which some inflict, and others sustain, upon the earth; and that he will infallibly recompense to the former their deeds, to the latter their sufferings. Destitute should we be of every earthly help, in the state of beggars and orphans, yet in him will we trust, who, as the father and protector of all such, saith unto every one of us, "I will never leave thee; "nor forsake thee."

15. *Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.*

This may be either a prayer, or a prediction, implying that the time will come, when the power of Jehovah will dash in pieces that of the enemy, by the demolition either of sin or the sinner, until wickedness be come utterly to an end, and righteousness be established for ever in the kingdom of Messiah. And lo,

16. *The* LORD *is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of the land.*

Faith beholds the Lord Jesus, as already manifested in his glorious majesty, the kingdoms of this world become his, and the Canaanite no more in the land of promise. Each individual experiences in himself a happy prelude to this manifestation, when Christ

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rules in his heart by the Spirit, and every appetite and affection is obedient to the sceptre of his kingdom.

17. LORD, *thou hast heard*, or, *hearest, the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare*, or, *thou preparest, their heart: thou wilt cause*, or, *thou causest, thine ear to hear.*

How many important and comforting truths have we here, in a few words! As, that the "humble" and lowly, whatever they may suffer in the world, are the favourites of Jehovah: that he attends to the very "desires" of their hearts: that such hearts "prepared" to prayer, are so many instruments strung and tuned by the hand of heaven: and that their prayer is as music, to which the Almighty himself listens with pleasure.

18. *To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.*

For the sake of the elect, and their prayers, the days of persecution and tribulation will be shortened; the insolence of the earth-born oppressor, the man of sin, will be chastised; the cause of the church will be heard at the tribunal of God; and victory, triumph, and glory will be given unto her. In the foregoing exposition, regard has been chiefly had to the case of the church, and to her sufferings from the spirit of antichrist, in whomsoever existing and acting, from time to time, in the world; this being judged the most generally useful application, which Christians, as such, can make of the Psalm. Particular accommodations of it to the various oppressions of innocent poverty by iniquitous opulence, will meet

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the eye, and offer themselves at once to persons so circumstanced, for their support and comfort, under their respective afflictions; which will be also not a little alleviated by the consideration, that the whole church of God groaneth with them, and travaileth in pain, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Then, and not till then, tears shall cease to run down the cheeks of misery; and sorrow and sighing shall fly away, to return no more for ever.

PSALM XI.

ARGUMENT.

The Psalmist, under persecution, 1—3. declareth himself resolved to trust in God alone, at a time when he was advised to fly to some place of refuge; 4. he expresses his faith in the omniscience and overruling power of Jehovah; 5. assigns the reason why good men are afflicted; who, after that the wicked, 6. shall be destroyed, will appear to have been all along, 7. the favoured of God.

1. *In the* LORD *put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?*

The Christian, like David, in perilous times, should make God his fortress, and continue doing his duty in his station; he should not, at the instigation of those about him, like a poor, silly, timorous, inconstant bird, either fly for refuge to the devices of worldly wisdom, or desert his post, and retire into

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solitude, while he can serve the cause in which he is engaged. Nor indeed is there any "mountain" on earth out of the reach of care and trouble. Temptations are every where; and so is the grace of God.

2. *For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.*

These seem to be still the words of David's friends, representing to him, as a motive for his flight, the extreme danger he was in from the "arrows" of the enemy, already, as it were, fitted to the "string," and pointed at him "in secret," so that not knowing from whence they were to come, he could not guard against them. The Christian's danger from the darts of the infernal archers, lying in wait for his soul, is full as great as that of David. But "the shield of "FAITH" sufficeth, in both cases.

3. *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

This likewise seems to be spoken by the same persons, discouraging David from making any farther resistance, by the consideration, that all was over; the "foundations" of religion and law were subverted; and what could a man, engaged in the most "righteous" designs, hope to "do," when that was the case? Such arguments are often urged by the timid, in similar circumstances; but they are fallacious; since all is not over, while there is a man left to reprove error, and bear testimony to the truth. And a man who does it with becoming spirit, may stop a prince, or senate, when in full career, and re-

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cover the day. But let us hear David's farther reply to his advisers.

4. *The* LORD *is in his holy temple, the* LORD'S *throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.*

In the first verse, the Psalmist had declared his trust to be in Jehovah. After reciting the reasonings of his friends, he now proceeds to evince the fitness and propriety of such trust, notwithstanding the seemingly desperate situation of affairs. "Jehovah "is in his holy temple;" into which, therefore, unholy men, however triumphant in this world, can never enter: "Jehovah's throne is in heaven;" and consequently superior to all power upon earth, which may be controlled and over-ruled by him in a moment; "his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the "children of men;" so that no secret wickedness can escape his knowledge, who scrutinizeth the hearts as well as the lives of all the sons of Adam. Why, then, should the man despair, who hath on his side holiness, omnipotence, and omniscience?

5. *The* LORD *trieth the righteous; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.*

As to the afflictions which persons may suffer, who are embarked in a righteous cause, they are intended to purge away the dross, and to refine them for the Master's use. "Gold," saith the son of Sirach, "is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in "the furnace of adversity;" Ecclus. ii. 5. In the mean time, God's displeasure against the wicked is ever the same, and their prosperity, instead of benefiting, will in the end destroy them. The cases

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of David and Saul, Christ and the Jews, martyrs and their persecutors, are all cases in point, and should be often in our thoughts to teach us patience, and guard us against despair, in seasons of calamity, pain, or disgrace.

6. *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares*, or, *burning coals, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest*: this shall be *the portion of their cup*.

St. Jude, ver. 7. tells us, that the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. for their abominable sins, "προκειται "δειγμα, are set forth for an example, or specimen, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." And here we see the images are plainly taken from the dreadful judgement inflicted on those cities, and transferred to the vengeance of the last day. Then the sons of faithful Abraham shall behold a prospect, like that which once presented itself to the eyes of their father; when, rising early in the morning, and looking toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, he "beheld, and lo, the smoke of "the country went up as the smoke of a furnace!" Gen. xix. 28. Such must be the "portion of their "cup," who have dashed from them the cup of salvation. He, therefore, who would enjoy the prosperity of the wicked here, must take with it their torment hereafter; as he who is ambitious of wearing the crown of righteousness in heaven, must be content to endure tribulation upon earth.

7. *For the righteous* LORD *loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.*

He who is in himself essential righteousness, cannot but love his own resemblance, wrought in the

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faithful by his good Spirit; with a countenance full of paternal affection, he beholds, and speaks peace and comfort to them, in the midst of their sorrows; until, admitted through mercy, to the glory, from which justice excludes the wicked, and beholding that countenance which has always beheld them, they shall enter upon a life of boundless and everlasting felicity.

SECOND DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XII.

ARGUMENT.

The church, through David, 1, 2. laments the decrease of God's faithful servants, and the universal corruption among men, but, 3—5. rests upon the divine promises, the truth and certainty of which, 6, 7. she celebrates, and comforts herself therewith, while in a world where oftentimes, 8. the wicked walk uncontrolled.

1. *Help*, Heb. *Save*, LORD, *for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.*

Our Lord foretels, that in the later days, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall "wax cold;" and seems to question whether, "when "the Son of man cometh, he shall find faith upon "the earth." The universal depravity of Jew and Gentile caused the church, of old, to pray earnestly

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for the first advent of Christ; and a like depravity among those who call themselves Christians, may induce her to pray no less earnestly for his appearance the second time unto salvation. It is frequently a benefit, to be destitute of help from man, both as it puts us upon seeking it from God, and inclines him to grant it, when we do seek.

2. *They speak vanity*, or, *a lie, every one with his neighbour:* with *flattering lips*, and *with a double heart do they speak.*

When men cease to be faithful to their God, he who expects to find them so to each other, will be much disappointed. The primitive sincerity will accompany the primitive piety in her flight from the earth; and then interest will succeed conscience in the regulation of human conduct, till one man cannot trust another farther than he holds him by that tie. Hence, by the way, it is, that although many are infidels themselves, yet few choose to have their families and dependants such; as judging, and rightly judging, that true Christians are the only persons to be depended on, for the exact discharge of social duties.

3. *The* LORD *shall cut off all flattering lips*, and *the tongue that speaketh proud things: 4. Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail, our lips* are *our own: who* is *lord over us?*

They who take pleasure in deceiving others, will at the last find themselves most of all deceived, when the Sun of truth, by the brightness of his rising, shall at once detect and consume hypocrisy. And as to men of another stamp, who speak great swelling

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words of vanity; who vaunt themselves in the arm of flesh, thinking to prevail by human wit, or human power; equally deplorable will be their case, when the Lord God "omnipotent" reigneth.

5. *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the* LORD; *I will set him in safety* from him that *puffeth at him.*

For the consolation of the afflicted and poor in spirit, Jehovah is here introduced promising, out of compassion to their sufferings, to "arise, and set "them in safety," or place them in a state of "sal-"vation." Such all along has been his promise to the church, who, by looking back to the deliverances wrought of old for the servants of God, and, above all, to that wrought for the Son of God, is now encouraged to look forward, and expect her final redemption from the scorn and insolence of infidelity.

6. *The words of the* LORD are *pure words;* as *silver tried in a furnace,* or, *crucible of earth, purified seven times.*

The church rejoices in the promises of God her Saviour, because they are such as she can confide in. His words are not like those of deceitful boasting man, but true and righteous altogether. Often have they been put to the test, in the trials of the faithful, like silver committed to the furnace, in an earthen crucible; but, like silver in its most refined and exalted purity, found to contain no dross of imperfection, no alloy of fallibility in them. The words of Jehovah are holy in his precepts, just in his laws, gracious in his promises, significant in his institutions, true in his narrations, and infallible in his

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predictions. What are the thousands of gold and silver, compared to the treasures of the sacred page!

7. *Thou shalt keep them, O* LORD, *thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

As if it had been said, Yes, blessed Lord, what thou hast promised shall surely be performed, since there is with thee no variableness, nor shadow of turning: thou wilt keep thy poor and lowly servants, as thou hast promised, from being circumvented by treachery, or crushed by power; thou wilt preserve them undefiled amidst an evil and adulterous generation; thou wilt be with thy church to the end of the world, and then admit her to be with thee for ever.

8. *The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.*

While the faithful repose, as they ought to do, an unlimited confidence in God's promises, they have, in the mean time, but too much reason to mourn the prevalence of wickedness, stalking, like its author, to and fro, and up and down in the earth, uncontrolled by those who bear the sword, but who either blunt its edge, or turn it the wrong way. Such is often the state of things here below; and a reflection, made upon the subject by our Lord, when his enemies drew near to apprehend him, may satisfy us how it comes to be so: "It is your hour, and the "power of darkness." But that hour will quickly pass with us, as it did with him, and the power of darkness will be overthrown; the Lord will be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended.

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PSALM XIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm contains, 1, 2. a complaint of desertion; 3, 4. a prayer for the divine assistance; 5, 6. an act of faith and thanksgiving.

1. *How long wilt thou forget me, O* LORD? *for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?*

While God permits his servants to continue under affliction, he is said, after the manner of men, to have "forgotten, and hid his face from them." For the use, therefore, of persons in such circumstances, is this Psalm intended; and, consequently, it suits the different cases of the church universal, languishing for the advent of our Lord to deliver her from this evil world; of any particular church, in time of persecution; and of each individual, when harassed by temptations, or broken by sickness, pain, and sorrow. He who bore our sins, and carried our sorrows, may likewise be presumed to have made it a part of his devotions in the day of trouble.

2. *How long shall I take counsel in my soul,* having *sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*

To excite compassion, and prevail for help from above, the petitioner mentions three aggravating circumstances of his misery: the perplexity of his soul, not knowing which way to turn, or what course to take; his heart-felt sorrow, uttering itself in sighs and groanings; and the mortifying reflection, that

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his enemies were exulting in their conquest over him. All this will happen, and be particularly painful, to him who has yielded to temptation, and committed sin.

3. *Consider* and *hear me, O* LORD *my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the* sleep of *death.*

On the preceding considerations is founded a prayer to Jehovah, that he would no longer hide his face, but "consider," or, more literally, "have respect "to, favourably behold" his servant; that he would "hear, attend to, be mindful of" his supplication in distress. The deliverance requested is expressed figuratively, "Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the "sleep of death." In time of sickness and grief, the "eyes" are dull and heavy; and they grow more and more so as death approaches, which closes them in darkness. On the other hand, health and joy render the organs of vision bright and sparkling, seeming, as it were, to impart "light" to them from within. The words, therefore, may be fitly applied to a recovery of the body natural, and thence of the body politic, from their respective maladies. Nor do they less significantly describe the restoration of the soul to a state of spiritual health and holy joy, which will manifest themselves in like manner, by "the eyes of "the understanding being enlightened;" and in this case, the soul is saved from the sleep of sin, as the body is, in the other, from the sleep of death.

4. *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him;* and *those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.*

This argument we often find urged in prayer to

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God, that he should be pleased to work salvation for his people, lest his and their enemies should seem to triumph over him as well as them; which would indeed have been the case, had Satan either seduced the true David to sin, or confined him in the grave. And certainly it should be a powerful motive to restrain us from transgression, when we consider, that as the conversion of a sinner brings glory to God, and causes joy among the angels of heaven; so the fall of a believer disgraces the Gospel of Jesus, opens the mouths of the adversaries, and would produce joy, if such a thing could be, in hell itself.

5. *But I have trusted*, or, *I trust, in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice*, or, *rejoices, in thy salvation.* 6. *I will sing unto the* LORD, *because he hath dealt*, or, *deals, bountifully with me.*

The heart which "trusteth in God's mercy," shall alone "rejoice in his salvation," and celebrate by the tongue, in songs of praise, the loving kindness of the Lord. It is observable, that this, and many other Psalms, with a mournful beginning, have a triumphant ending; to show us the prevailing power of devotion, and to convince us of the certain return of prayer, sooner or later, bringing with it the comforts of heaven, to revive and enrich our weary and barren spirits in the gloomy seasons of sorrow and temptation, like the dew descending by night upon the withered summit of an eastern mountain.

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PSALM XIV.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is in a manner the same with the 53d. It sets forth, 1—3. the corruption of the world; 4—6. its enmity against the people of God; 7. the prophet longs and prays for salvation.

1. *The fool hath said in his heart,* There is *no God: they are corrupt, they have done abominable works,* there is *none that doth good.*

It does not appear upon what occasion David composed this Psalm. The revolt of Israel in Absalom's rebellion, is by most writers pitched upon as the subject of it. But, be this as it may, the expressions are general, and evidently designed to extend beyond a private interpretation. And accordingly, the apostle (Rom. iii. 10, &c.) produces some passages from it, to evince the apostasy of both Jews and Gentiles from their King and their God, and to prove them to be all under sin. In this light, therefore, we are to consider it, as characterizing the principles and practices of those who oppose the Gospel of Christ in all ages. "The fool hath said in his heart, There "is no God." Infidelity is the beginning of sin, folly the foundation of infidelity, and the heart the seat of both. "Their foolish heart (says St. Paul "of the heathen, Rom. i. 21.) was darkened." The sad consequence of defection in principle, is corruption in practice. "They are corrupt, they have "done abominable works, there is none that doth

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"good." On these words the reader may see a full comment, Rom. i. 28—32.

2. *The* LORD *looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there was any that did understand,* and *seek God.* 3. *They are all gone aside, they are* all *together become filthy,* or, *putrefied:* there is *none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Like a watchman on the top of some lofty tower, God is represented as surveying, from his heavenly throne, the sons of Adam, and their proceedings upon the earth; he scrutinizes them, and as it were searches diligently, to find among them a man of true wisdom, one whose heart was turned toward the Lord his God, one who was enquiring the way to salvation and glory, that he might walk therein. But as the result of this extensive and accurate survey, God informs his prophet, and commissions him to inform the world, that all had declined from the paths of wisdom and righteousness; that the mass of human nature was become putrid, requiring to be cleansed, and the vessels made of it to be formed anew. Such is the Scripture account of man, not having received grace, or having fallen from it; of man without Christ, or in arms against him. See Rom. iii. 11, 12.

*4. *Have all the workers of iniquity no know-*

* Between the preceding verse and this are three others inserted in our common translation, which, though taken by St. Paul from other parts of Scripture, yet because (Rom. iii. 13.) they followed the words cited from this Psalm, were probably added thereunto in this place by some transcribers of the copies of the LXX. For in other copies of the LXX, they exist not any more than in the Hebrew, Chaldee, or Syriac.

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ledge? who eat up my people as *they eat bread, and call not upon the* LORD.

The "workers of iniquity," work for the wages of death; they fight against God and their own souls; they barter eternity for time, and part with happiness for misery, both in possession and reversion. Well therefore may it be asked, "Have they no "knowledge?" For common sense, after all, is what they want. They who, with an appetite keen as that to their food, prey upon the poor, and devour the people of God, will themselves be preyed upon and devoured by that roaring lion, whose agents for the present they are; and such as now "call not on" the name of "the Lord" Jesus for pardon and salvation, shall hereafter call in vain upon the rocks and mountains, to shelter them from his power and vengeance.

5. *There were they in great fear; for God* is *in the generation of the righteous.*

In the parallel place, Ps. liii. 5. after the words, "There were they in great fear," are added these, "where no fear was," which certainly connect better with what follows, "for God is in the genera-"tion of the righteous." David is supposed to be speaking primarily of Israel's defection from him to Absalom, and here to be assigning the motive of that defection in many, namely, fear of the rebel's growing power, and distrust of his ability to protect them; which fear, he observes, was groundless, because his cause was the cause of God, who would not fail to appear in its support and vindication. The subjects of Christ, in times of persecution, are often

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tempted to renounce their allegiance, upon the same principle of fear; although of them it may more emphatically be said, that they "fear where no fear "is, since God is in the generation of the righteous;" and they who are engaged on the side of Messiah, will, in the end, most assuredly be triumphant. The latter clause of this verse, in Psalm liii. runs thus: "For God hath scattered, or, shall scatter, the bones "of him that encampeth against thee; thou hast, or "shalt, put them to shame, because God hath de-"spised them:" the sense of which is evidently the same with—"God is in the generation of the righ-"teous:" he will defend them and overthrow their enemies: therefore let them not fear, neither let their hearts be troubled. If this interpretation be disapproved, the words, "There were they in great fear," must be understood of the enemy; and the clause, "where no fear was," must be rendered interrogatively thus, "and was there not cause for them to fear? "since God is in the generation of the righ-"teous, or, will scatter the bones of him that en-"campeth against thee," &c.

6. *Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the* LORD *is his refuge.*

This is plainly addressed to the adversaries, and charges them with reproaching and scoffing at that confidence in the Lord, expressed by the afflicted righteous, in the preceding verse.

7. *O that the salvation of Israel* were come *out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.*

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The consideration of the apostasy and corruption of mankind, described in this Psalm, makes the Prophet express a longing desire for the salvation of Israel, which was to go forth out of Zion, and to bring back the people of God from that most dreadful of all captivities, the captivity under sin and death; a salvation, at which Jacob would indeed rejoice, and Israel be glad. And how doth the whole church, at this time, languish for the consummation of her felicity, looking, even until her eyes fail, for that glorious day of final redemption, when every believing heart shall exult, and all the sons of God shout aloud for joy!

THIRD DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XV.

ARGUMENT.

This is one of the Psalms appointed to be used on Ascension-day. The Prophet, 1. inquires concerning the person, who should ascend into the hill, and dwell in the temple of Jehovah; 2—5. he receives, in answer to his question, a character of such person.

1. LORD, *who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

The Prophet alludes to the hill of Sion in the earthly Jerusalem, to the tabernacle of God which

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was thereon, and the character of the priest, who should officiate in that tabernacle. But all these were figures of a celestial Jerusalem, a spiritual Sion, a true tabernacle, and an eternal priest. To the great originals therefore we must transfer our ideas, and consider the inquiry as made after Him, who should fix his resting-place on the heavenly mount, and exercise his unchangeable priesthood in the temple not made with hands. And since the disciples of this new and great High Priest become righteous in him, and are by the Spirit conformed to his image, the character which essentially and inherently belongs only to him, will derivatively belong to them also, who must follow his steps below, if they would reign with him above.

2. *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*

The man, therefore, who would be a citizen of Zion, and there enter into the rest and joy of his Lord, must set that Lord always before him. Renewed through grace, endued with a lively faith, and an operative charity, he must consider and imitate the life of that blessed Person who walked amongst men, without partaking of their corruptions; who conversed unblameably with sinners; who could give this challenge to his inveterate enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" in whom the grand Accuser, when he came, "found nothing;" who, being himself "the Truth," thought and spake of nothing else; making many promises, and performing them all.

3. He that *backbiteth not with his tongue, nor*

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doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

Who, knowing the sins, follies, and infirmities of all mankind, made his tongue an instrument, not of disclosing and exasperating, but of covering and healing these sores in human nature; who, esteeming every son of Adam as his neighbour, went about doing good; and then laid down his life, and resigned his breath in prayer for his murderers; who, instead of taking up a reproach, and listening to the calumniator, cast him out, and silenced him, by erasing the hand-writing that was against us, and nailing the cancelled indictment to the cross;

4. *In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the* LORD: he that *sweareth to* his own *hurt, and changeth not.*

Who rejected the wicked, however rich and honourable; and chose the well inclined, however poor and contemptible in the world; who having, by covenant with the Father, engaged to keep the law, and to taste death for every man, went willingly and steadily through this work, and surmounted every obstacle which could be thrown in his way, until he declared, concerning the task appointed him, "It is "finished;"

5. He that *putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent.*

Who was so far from desiring to amass the earthly mammon, that he would touch none of it; and received the true riches, only that he might bestow them upon others; who, instead of taking a reward against the innocent, died for the guilty; and whose

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sentence, when he shall sit on the throne of judgement, will be equally impartial and immutable.

6. *He that doeth these* things, *shall never be moved.*

In the above comment, it was thought most advisable to open and display the full extent of what was both enjoined and forbidden, by exemplifying each particular, as receiving its utmost completion, in the character and conduct of our blessed Lord. And whoever shall survey and copy these virtues and graces, as they present themselves in his life, will, it is humbly apprehended, take the best and shortest way to the heavenly Zion, and make that use of the xvth Psalm, which the Church may be supposed to have had in view, when she appointed it as one of the proper Psalms for Ascension-day.

PSALM XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Upon whatever occasion, or in whatever distress, David might compose this Psalm, we are taught by St. Peter and St. Paul, Acts ii. 25. and xiii. 35. to consider him as speaking in the person of our Lord Christ, of whom alone the latter part of the Psalm is true. The contents are, 1. a prayer for support; 2, 3. a declaration of love to the saints; 4. a protestation against idolaters; 5—8. acts of love, joy, and confidence in Jehovah; and 9—11. one of hope in an approaching resurrection and glorification.

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1. *Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust.*

These words are evidently spoken by one in great distress, who addresses himself to heaven for support under his sufferings, pleading his confidence in God, still unshaken by all the storms that had set themselves against it. This might be the case of David, and may be that of any believer. But since the Psalm is a continued speech without change of person, we may consider the whole as uttered by Him who only could utter the concluding verses, and who in this first verse makes his supplication to the Father, for the promised and expected deliverance.

2. O my soul, *thou hast said unto the* LORD, *Thou* art *my Lord: my goodness* extendeth *not to thee;* 3. But *to the saints that* are *in the earth, and* to *the excellent, in whom* is *all my delight.*

In the Chaldee and Syriac, the latter clause of the former of these two verses is rendered—"My good-"ness is from thee." An ingenious writer thinks the Hebrew will bear this sense, in the elliptical way, thus—"My goodness; shall I mention that? By no "means; it is all to be ascribed to thee." The goodness of man is all derived from God, and should be extended to his brethren. That of Messiah owed its original to his union with the Divinity; and promoted the salvation of those to whom it was communicated, that is to say, of those who thereby became "the "saints and excellent ones in the earth." For their sakes obedience was performed, and propitiation made, by the Son of God, because he loved them with an everlasting love, and placed "all his delight"

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in making them happy. He rejoiced in "the habit-"able parts of the earth, and his delights were with "the sons of men." Prov. viii. 31.

4. *Their sorrow shall be multiplied* that *hasten* after *another* god: *their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*

Christ denounceth vengeance against those who should make to themselves other gods, run after other saviours, or suffer any creature to rival him in their affections; declaring of such, that their offerings should not be presented by him to the Father, nor should they be partakers of the benefits of his intercession. Even the bloody sacrifices of the law, instituted for a time by God himself, became abomination to him when that time was expired, and the one great sacrifice had been offered upon the altar of the cross.

5. *The* LORD is *the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot.* 6. *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant* places; *yea, I have a goodly heritage.*

The true David, anointed to his everlasting kingdom, yet first a man of sorrows and a stranger upon earth, prefers the promised inheritance of the church, that spiritual kingdom, city, and temple of Jehovah, before all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; he is sure that Jehovah will maintain his lot, that he will both give and preserve to him this his patrimony; and therefore rejoices at the divine beauty and excellency of the heavenly Canaan. And hence the Christian learns wherein his duty and his happiness consist; namely, in making choice of God

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for "the portion of his inheritance and of his cup," for his support and for his delight; in preferring the spirit to the flesh, the church to the world, and eternity to time.

7. *I will bless the* LORD, *who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*

The person speaking here blesses Jehovah for communicating that divine "counsel," that celestial wisdom, by which he was incited and enabled to make the foregoing choice and resolution. In the latter part of the verse is intimated the mode of these gracious and spiritual communications, which in the dark seasons of adversity were conveyed to the inmost thoughts and affections of the mind, thereby to instruct, to comfort, and to strengthen the sufferer, until his passion should be accomplished, and the morning of the resurrection should dawn, in which, as we shall see, all his hope and confidence were placed.

8. *I have set the* LORD *always before me; because* he is *at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

The method taken by Christ as man, to support himself in time of trouble, and persevere unto the end, was to maintain a constant actual sense of the presence of Jehovah, whom when he thus saw standing at his right hand, ready, at the appointed hour, to succour and deliver him, he then feared not the powers of earth and hell combined for his destruction. Why are our fears great, but because our faith is little?

9. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

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Through confidence in the almighty power engaged on his side, joy filled the heart of Christ, and rendered his tongue an instrument of giving glory to Jehovah in the midst of his sufferings; because when they were ended, as they must soon be, his flesh was only to make its bed, and rest a while, in the grave, after the labours of the day, in sure and certain hope of a speedy resurrection and glorification. This same consideration is to the afflicted, the sick, and the dying Christian, a never-failing source of comfort, an inexhaustible fountain of joy: sin and infidelity are the enemies, who would fill it with earth.

10. *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.*

It was a part of the covenant of grace, and promised by the mouth of God's prophets, that after the death of Messiah, his animal frame, נפש, should not continue, like those of other men, in the grave, שאול, nor should corruption be permitted to seize on the body, by which all others were to be raised to incorruption and immortality. As members of Christ, this same promise and assurance is so far ours, that although our mortal part must see corruption, yet it shall not be finally left under the power of the enemy, but shall be raised again, and reunited to its old companion the soul, which exists, meanwhile, in secret and undiscerned regions, there waiting for the day when its Redeemer shall triumph over corruption, in his mystical, as he hath already done in his natural body.

11. *Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy*

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presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are *pleasures for evermore.*

The return of Christ from the grave is beautifully described by Jehovah "showing," or discovering to him a "path of life," leading through the valley of the shadow of death, and from that valley to the summit of the hill of Zion, or to the mount of God in heaven, on which he now sits enthroned. There exalted at the right hand of the Father, that human body, which expired on the cross, and slept in the sepulchre, lives and reigns, filled with delight, and encircled by glory incomprehensible and endless. Through this thy beloved Son and our dear Saviour, "thou shalt show" us likewise, O Lord, "the path "of life;" thou shalt justify our souls by thy grace now, and raise our bodies by thy power at the last day; when earthly sorrow shall terminate in heavenly joy, and momentary pain shall be rewarded with everlasting felicity.

PSALM XVII.

ARGUMENT.

The Psalmist, confiding in the justice of his cause, 1—4. prayeth for a hearing and decision of it; 5—9. he petitioneth for the divine guidance and protection; 10—12. he describeth the temper and behaviour of his enemies; 13, 14. beseecheth God to disappoint them, and to deliver him; he endeth with an act of faith.

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1. *Hear the right, O* LORD, or, *Hear, O righteous* LORD, *attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer*, that goeth *not out of feigned lips.*

The righteousness of the judge, and the importunity and sincerity of the petitioner, are the arguments here urged for a speedy and favourable determination. Slander and calumny were the portion of David, and of a greater than David, till the righteous Lord manifested himself on their behalf. And shall not God, in like manner, judge and avenge the cause of "his own elect, who cry day and night unto him?" "I tell you," saith Christ himself, "that he will "avenge them speedily." Luke xviii. 8. "Men "ought always to pray, therefore, and not to faint."

2. *Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.*

A court of equity is ever sitting in heaven, to receive appeals from the wrongful decisions of men here below; and in that court a judge presides, whose impartial hand holds the scales of justice even; whose unerring eye marks the least inclination of either; and from whose sentence injured innocence is therefore taught to expect redress.

3. *Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited* me *in the night; thou hast tried me*, and *shall find nothing: I am purposed* that *my mouth shall not transgress.*

The sufferer's "heart condemns him not, and he "has confidence towards God," to whom he applies as the proper judge, because the only witness, of his integrity. God had "proved" not only his words and actions, but his "heart," which man could not

do: God had "visited," observed, and explored him "in the night," when secrecy and solitude prompt the hypocrite to sin, and when the undisciplined imagination wanders abroad, like the bird of darkness, after forbidden objects: God had "tried" him, as silver or gold, in the fiery furnace of adversity; and if there be any dross or scum in the metal, it will then rise to the top, and shew itself; yet nothing appeared, not so much as the alloy of an intemperate word. Absolutely and universally this could only be true of the holy Jesus; however, through his grace, it may be true of some of his disciples in particular instances of crimes falsely laid to their charge. Let us pray that it may be true of us, whenever God shall please to prove and try us.

4. *Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips, I have kept* me from *the paths of the destroyer.*

The way to hold fast our integrity in time of temptation is here pointed out. "Concerning the works "of men," that is, such works as fallen, depraved man has resource to, when in distress, "by the word "of thy lips," by treasuring up thy word in my heart, as the rule of my actions, and the guide of my life, "I have watched," observed, that is, in order to avoid, "the paths of the destroyer." This seems to be the literal construction, and to convey the full meaning of the verse, which contains exactly the same sentiment with that in Psalm cxix. 11. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might "not sin against thee." If the word either be not in the heart at all, or if it be not there in such a

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manner as to be ready at all times for use and application, the man is in danger, at every turn, of going astray.

5. *Hold up my goings in thy paths,* that *my footsteps slip not.*

The word of God affords us direction, but the grace of God must enable us to follow its direction, and that grace must be obtained by prayer. The "paths of God" are opposed to the "paths of the "destroyer," the way of righteousness to that of sin. The image here is taken from one walking in a slippery path, for such is that of human life, by reason of temptations; so that the believer, especially if he be young, feeble, and inexperienced, has great need of a divine supporter in every step he takes.

6. *I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me,* or, *because thou hast heard me, O God: incline thine ear to me,* and hear *my speech.*

The sweet experience of former deliverances giveth a comfortable assurance of protection in present and future dangers; and this should cause us to fly for refuge at all times, by strong supplication and prayer, to him who is able and willing to save us from death.

7. *Show thy marvellous loving kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust* in thee *from those that rise up* against them.

This is an address to the "loving kindness," or mercy of God, which the Psalmist entreats him to display and magnify in his favour, since it was the promise, the delight, and the glory of Jehovah, to save those who believed and trusted in HIM.

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There are two ways of rendering the latter clause of this verse: either, "Thou who savest by thy right "hand," &c. as our translation has it: or, "Thou "that savest them which put their trust in thee from "those that rise up at, or, against thy right hand," meaning the opposers of the divine counsels and dispensations: as in Zech. iii. 1, Satan is said to "stand at Joshua's right hand," to obstruct the building of the temple.

8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye: hide me under the shadow of thy wings.* 9. *From the wicked that oppress me,* from *my deadly enemies,* who *compass me about.*

He who has so fenced and guarded that precious and tender part, the pupil of the eye, and who has provided for the security of a young and helpless brood under the wings of the dam, is here entreated to extend the same providential care and parental love to the souls of his elect, equally exposed to danger, equally beset with enemies. Of his readiness so to do he elsewhere assureth us, under the same exquisite imagery, Zech. ii. 8. "He that toucheth "you, toucheth the apple of his eye." Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would "I have gathered thy children together, even as a "hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!"

10. *They are enclosed in their own fat; with their mouth they speak proudly.*

The last argument made use of by the Psalmist, in his address to God, is the character of his adversaries. He begins with their "pride," and its cause, "fulness of bread," or high living. Dr.

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Hammond prefers the rendering which follows: "They have shut up their mouth with fat; they "speak proudly." Either way the meaning plainly is, that pride is the child of plenty, begotten by self-indulgence, which hardens the hearts of men against the fear of God, and the love of their neighbours; rendering them insensible to the judgements of the former, and the miseries of the latter. Let every man take care, that, by pampering the flesh, he do not raise up an enemy of this stamp against himself.

11. *They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*

"They have compassed us in our steps;" that is, literally, Saul and his followers had watched, pursued, and at last hemmed in David and his men; "They have set, or fixed their eyes" upon us, נטו עינם, "to lay us prostrate upon the earth," or finally to make an end of us. Such are our spiritual enemies; such is their intention, and our danger.

12. *Like as a lion* that *is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.*

The similitude of a lion, either roaring abroad in quest of his prey, or couching in secret, ready to spring upon it the moment it comes within his reach, is often employed by David, to describe the power and malice of his enemies. Christians cannot forget, that they likewise have an adversary of the same nature and character; one ever seeking whom, and contriving how, he may devour.

13. *Arise, O* Lord, *disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked,* which is

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thy sword: 14. *From men* which are *thy hand, O* LORD, *from men of the world,* which have *their portion in* this *life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid* treasure: *they are full of children, and leave the rest of their* substance *to their babes.*

The Psalmist, having characterised those who pursued after him to take away his life, now entreats God to "arise" or appear in his cause, to "disappoint" or "prevent" the enemy in his designs, and to "cast "him down," to overthrow and subdue him. The next words may be thus rendered; "Deliver my "soul from the wicked by thy sword, from men by "thy hand, O LORD, from the men of the world;" the expressions, "sword" and "hand of Jehovah," being frequently used to denote his power and vengeance. The מתים מהלד or "mortals of the transi-"tory world," from whom David prays to be delivered, are said to be such as have "their portion in "this life," such as, in our Saviour's language, "have "their reward" here, and are not to expect it hereafter; "whose bellies thou fillest with thy hid "treasure;" whom thou permittest to enjoy thy temporal blessings in abundance, to "receive their good "things" upon earth, and to "fare sumptuously "every day;" as if it were to convince us, in what estimation we ought to hold the world, when we see the largest shares of it dealt out to the most worthless of the sons of Adam: "They are full of, or abound "in children, and leave the residue of their substance "to their babes;" after living in plenty, perhaps to a good old age, they leave behind them a numerous and flourishing posterity, who inherit their estates,

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and go on, as their fathers did before them, without piety to God, or charity to the poor. From these men and their ways, we have all reason to say with David, "Good Lord deliver us!"

15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

Instead of setting our affections on things below, the Prophet instructs us, after his example, to place all our happiness in the vision of God, and in that righteousness which leads to it; since the hour is coming, when we shall awake, and arise, after the divine similitude; when we shall be like God, for we shall see him as he is, and by seeing him shall be changed into the same image: and then shall every desire be satisfied with the fulness of joy, with the exceeding abundance of unutterable glory.

THIRD DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, as we are informed by the sacred history, 2 Sam. xxii. 1. was composed and sung by David, in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. It contains, ver. 1—3. an address of thanks to Jehovah; 4—6. a relation of sufferings undergone, and prayers made for assistance; 7—15. a magnificent description of the divine in-

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terposition in favour of the sufferer, and 16—19. of the deliverance wrought for him, 20—24. in consideration of his righteousness, 25—28. according to the tenour of God's equitable proceeding; 29—36. to Jehovah is ascribed the glory of the victory, which, 37—42. is represented as every way complete, by the destruction of all opponents, and, 43—45. the submission of the heathen; for these events, 46—50. God is blessed and praised. As the sublimity of the figures used in this Psalm, and the consent of ancient commentators, even Jewish as well as Christian, but above all, the citations made from it in the New Testament, do evince, that the kingdom of Messiah is here pointed at, under that of David, an application is therefore made of the whole, in the ensuing comment, to the sufferings, resurrection, righteousness, and conquests of Christ, to the destruction of the Jews, and conversion of the Gentiles. In a word, the Psalm, it is apprehended, should now be considered as a glorious epinikion, or triumphal hymn, to be sung by the church, risen and victorious in Christ her Head.

I. *I will love thee, O* LORD, *my strength.*

Let us suppose king Messiah, like his illustrious progenitor of old, seated in peace and triumph upon the throne designed and prepared for him. From thence let us imagine him taking a retrospect view of

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the sufferings he had undergone, the battles he had fought, and the victories he had gained. With this idea duly impressed upon our minds, we shall be able, in some measure, to conceive the force of the words, "אדמך, with all the yearnings of affection: "I will love thee, O Jehovah, my strength, through "my union with whom, I have finished my work, "and am now exalted to praise thee, in the name "of a redeemed world." Whenever we sing this Psalm, let us think we are singing it in conjunction with our Saviour, newly risen from the dead; a consideration which surely will incite us to do it with becoming gratitude and devotion.

2. *The* LORD *is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation,* and *my high tower.*

In other words, explanatory of the figures here made use of, Through Jehovah it is, that I have stood immoveable amidst a sea of temptations and afflictions; he has supported me under my troubles, and delivered me out of them; his protection has secured me, his power has broken and scattered mine enemies; and by his mercy and truth am I now set up on high above them all.—How lovely these strains, in the mouth of the church militant! How glorious will they be, when sung by the church triumphant! It is observable, that the words, "in "whom I trust," or, as the original has it, "I will "trust in him," are referred to, in the margin of our English Bible, as quoted from this verse by St. Paul, Heb. ii, 13. If it be so, the reader, by turning to

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the place, may furnish himself with a demonstration, that in the xviiith, as well as in the xvith Psalm, David speaks in the person of Christ.

3. *I will,* or, *did, call upon the* LORD, who is *worthy to be praised; so shall I be,* or, *so was I, saved from mine enemies.*

As the Psalm so evidently throughout is a thanksgiving for past deliverances, the verbs in this verse seem to require the same rendering which is given to them below, at ver. 6. Jehovah is to be "called "upon" both in adversity and in prosperity; in the former with the voice of prayer, in the latter with that of praise. "Is any afflicted?" saith St. James, v. 13. "Let him pray. Is any merry? let him "sing Psalms."

4. *The sorrows,* or, *cords, of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men,* or, *Belial, made me afraid.* 5. *The sorrows,* or, *cords, of hell,* or, *the grave, compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.*

St. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, says, when speaking of Christ—"Whom God hath "raised up, having loosed the pains of death, be-"cause it was not possible that he should be holden "of it:" Acts ii. 24. "Now the Hebrew word חבל" (as Dr. Hammond well observes on that place) "signifies two things, a *cord* or *band,* and a *pang,* "especially of women in travail; hence the LXX "meeting with the word, Ps. xviii. where it certain-"ly signifies χοινια, *cords,* or *bands,* have yet ren-"dered it ωδινες, *pangs;* and from their example here, "St. Luke hath used τας ωδινας θανατου, the *pains* or

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"*pangs* of death; when both the addition of the "word λυσας, *loosing*, and κρατεισθαι, being *holden fast*, "do show the sense is *bands*, or *cords*." From the passage in the Acts, with this learned and judicious remark upon it, we obtain not only the true rendering of the phrase "חבלי מות cords, or bands of death," but also something more than an intimation that, in the verses of our Psalm now before us, David speaks of Christ, that the "cords of death," those "bands" due to our sins, "compassed him about, and the "floods of Belial," the powers of darkness and ungodliness, like an overwhelming torrent breaking forth from the bottomless pit, "made him afraid," in the day of his agony, when the apprehensions of the bitter cup cast his soul into unutterable amazement, and he beheld himself environed by those "snares" which had captivated and detained all the children of Adam. David, surrounded by Saul and his blood-thirsty attendants, was a lively emblem of the suffering Jesus, and therefore the same description is applicable to both; as the words of the second Psalm, in like manner, celebrate the inauguration of the son of Jesse, and that of the Son of God.

6. *In my distress I called upon the* LORD, *and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.*

David was in distress; David called upon Jehovah, the God of Israel, who dwelt between the Cherubims in the holy place; and by him the prayer of David was heard. Much greater was the distress

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of Christ, who likewise, as St. Paul speaks, "in the "days of his flesh offered up prayers and supplica- "tions, with strong crying and tears, unto him that "was able to save him from death, and was heard;" Heb. v. 7. his voice ascended to the eternal temple, his powerful cry pierced the ears of the Father everlasting, and brought salvation from heaven at the time appointed. The church also is distressed upon earth, she crieth, her cries are heard, and will be answered in the day of God.

7. *Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.*

At this verse the Prophet begins to describe the manifestation of divine power in favour of the Righteous Sufferer. The imagery employed is borrowed from mount Sinai, and those circumstances which attended the delivery of the law from thence. When a monarch is angry, and prepares for war, his whole kingdom is instantly in commotion. Universal nature is here represented as feeling the effects of its sovereign's displeasure, and all the visible elements are disordered. The earth shakes from its foundations, and all its rocks and mountains tremble before the majesty of their great Creator, when he ariseth in judgement. This was really the case at the resurrection of our Lord from the dead; when, as the Evangelist informs us, "there was a great earth- "quake," and the grave owned its inability any longer to detain the blessed body, which had been committed, for a season, to its custody. And what

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happened at the resurrection of Jesus, should remind us of what shall happen, when the earth shall tremble, and the dead shall be raised, at the last day.

8. *There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it;* or, *fire out of his mouth devoured, with burning coals from before him.*

The farther effects of God's indignation are represented by those of fire, which is the most terrible of the created elements, burning and consuming all before it, scorching the ground, and causing the mountains to smoke. Under this appearance God descended on the top of Sinai: thus he visited the cities of the plain; and thus he is to come at the end of time. Whenever therefore he is described as showing forth his power and vengeance for the salvation of his chosen, and the discomfiture of his enemies, a "devouring fire" is the emblem made choice of, to convey proper ideas of such his manifestations. And from hence we may conceive that heat of his wrath against the adversaries of man's salvation, when, by raising his Son Jesus from the dead, he blasted their schemes, and withered all their strength.

9. *He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.* 10. *And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly on the wings of the wind.* 11. *He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him* were *dark waters* and *thick clouds of the skies.*

Storms and tempests in the element of air are instruments of the divine displeasure, and are therefore selected as figures of it. When God descends from

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above, the clouds of heaven compose an awful and gloomy tabernacle, in the midst of which he is supposed to reside: the reins of whirlwinds are in his hand, and he directs their impetuous course through the world; the whole artillery of the aerial regions is at his command, to be by him employed against his enemies, in the day of battle and war.

12. *At the brightness* that was *before him, his thick clouds passed, hail* stones *and coals of fire.*
13. *The* LORD *also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail* stones *and coals of fire.*
14. *Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.*

The discharge of the celestial artillery upon the adverse powers is here magnificently described. Terrible it was to them, as when lightnings and thunders, hail stones and balls of fire, making their way through the dark clouds which contain them, strike terror and dismay into the hearts of men. Such is the "voice," and such are the "arrows," of the Lord Almighty, wherewith he "discomfiteth" all who oppose the execution of his counsels, and obstruct the salvation of his chosen. Every display and description of this sort, and indeed every thunder-storm which we behold, should remind us of that exhibition of power and vengeance, which is hereafter to accompany the general resurrection.

15. *Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O* LORD, *at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.*

As the former part of the Psalmist's description

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was taken from the appearance on mount Sinai, so this latter part seems evidently to allude to what passed at the Red Sea, when by the breath of God the waters were divided, the depths were discovered, and Israel was conducted in safety through them. By that event was prefigured the salvation of the church universal, through the death and resurrection of Christ, who descended into the lower parts of the earth, and from thence reascended to light and life. The xivth chapter of Exodus, which relates the passage of Israel through the Red Sea, is therefore appointed as one of the proper lessons on Easter Day. And thus we obtain the ideas intended to be conveyed in this sublime but difficult verse, together with their application to the grand deliverance of the true David, in the day of God's power. Indeed it is not easy to accommodate to any part of the history of the son of Jesse those awful, majestic, and stupendous images, which are made use of throughout this whole description of the divine manifestation, from verse 7. But, however this be, most certainly every part of so solemn a scene of terrors forbids us to doubt but that a "GREATER than David is here;" since creation scarce affords colours brighter and stronger than those here employed, wherewith to paint the appearance of Jehovah at the day of final redemption.

16. *He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many*, or, *the great waters*. 17. *He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.*

For this purpose did God in so wonderful a manner display his power and glory, that he might deli-

ver the sufferer out of his troubles. This deliverance is first expressed metaphorically, by "drawing him "out of the great waters," and then plainly, "he "delivered me from my strong enemy," &c. "The "great waters," in ver 16. are the same with "the "floods of the ungodly," in ver. 4. By these was Messiah, like David, oppressed and overwhelmed for a time; but, like David, he arose at length superior to them all. The "strong enemy" was obliged to give way to a "stronger than he, who overcame him, "and took from him his armour in which he trusted, "and divided the spoil:" Luke, xi. 22.

18. *They prevented me in the day of my calamity; but the* LORD *was my stay.* 19. *He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.*

The divine mercy is celebrated again and again through this sacred hymn, in a variety of expressions. Innumerable foes "prevented," that is, surrounded, enclosed Christ on all sides, "in the day of "his calamity," when the powers of earth and hell set themselves in array against him; but "Jehovah "was his stay;" on him he reposed an unshaken confidence: Jehovah therefore supported his steps, and led him on to victory and triumph; from the narrow confines of the grave he translated him to unbounded empire, because he was the son of his love, in whom he delighted.

20. *The* LORD *rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.* 21. *For I have kept the ways of the* LORD, *and have not wickedly departed*

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from my God. 22. *For all his judgements were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.* 23. *I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity,* or, *from iniquities.* 24. *Therefore hath the* LORD *recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eye-sight.*

Commentators have been much perplexed to account for these unlimited claims to righteousness made by David, and that, long after the matter of Uriah, and towards the close of life. Certain indeed it is, that the expressions, considered as David's, must be confined either to his steadfast adherence to the true worship in opposition to idolatry, or to his innocency with regard to some particular crimes falsely alleged against him by his adversaries. But if the Psalm be prophetical, and sung by the victorious monarch in the person of king Messiah; then do the verses now before us no less exactly than beautifully delineate that all-perfect righteousness wrought by the Redeemer, in consequence of which, he obtained deliverance for himself and his people. For "His" righteousness' sake Jehovah was well pleased, and rewarded with everlasting felicity the unspotted purity of his works: "He" performed an unsinning obedience to every part of the law, and swerved not from its line in a single instance: the rule was ever in his eye, and no temptation could induce him to deviate from its direction; like the light, he passed through all things undefiled, and his garments were white as the lily; therefore a glorious

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kingdom was given unto him, forasmuch as in him the piercing eye of heaven could discover no blemish at all.

25. *With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright:* 26. *With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward:* Heb. *with the perverse thou wilt wrestle,* or, *strive.*

The reason is here assigned why God "recompensed Messiah according to the cleanness of his "hands," namely, because he is just, in rendering to every one according to his works. He who is "merciful" to his brethren shall obtain the divine mercy; he who is "upright" in his dealings with others, will have justice done him by the great Judge, against his iniquitous oppressors; he who is "pure" from deceit and hypocrisy in the service of his God, shall experience in himself a faithful and exact performance of the promises which God hath made to such; but the man that is "froward," perverse, and rebellious, must expect to grapple with an arm which will either humble or destroy. See Levit. xxvi. 3, 4, &c. 23, 24, &c. 1 Kings, viii. 32. Prov. iii. 34.

27. *For thou wilt save the afflicted,* or, *lowly, people: but wilt bring down high looks.*

"God resisteth the proud," saith an apostle, "and "giveth grace unto the humble:" James iv. 6. And, indeed, what is the covenant of grace, but a covenant to humble pride, and to exalt humility; what was it, but the humility of Christ, that subdued the

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pride of Satan; and on what does the salvation of every man depend, but on the issue of the contest between these two principles in his heart?

28. *For thou wilt*, or, *dost, light my candle*, or, *lamp: the* LORD *my* GOD *will*, or, *does enlighten my darkness.*

An instance of God's favour towards the lowly and afflicted was the salvation vouchsafed to the suffering Jesus, who, like David, after much tribulation and persecution, under which he sunk for a time, even so low as to the grave itself, was exalted to glory and honour. This change of condition is set forth by that of "a lamp," from a state of extinction to one of illumination, darkness being a well-known emblem of sorrow and death, as light is the established symbol of life and joy. Remarkable are the words of the Chaldee paraphrast upon this verse, cited by Dr. Hammond—"Because thou shalt enlighten the "lamp of Israel, which is put out in the captivity, "for thou art the author of the light of Israel; the "Lord my God shall lead me out of darkness into "light, and shall make me see the consolation of the "age which shall come to the just."

29. *For by thee I have run through*, or, *broken, a troop: and by my God have I leaped over a wall.*

Through the power of his divinity, the Captain of our salvation vanquished the host of darkness, and escaped from the sepulchre, notwithstanding all their precautions to confine him there. Vain is every effort, by whomsoever it is made, against the counsels of omnipotence. And let us reflect, for our comfort, that they who could not prevent the resur-

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rection of Christ, cannot detain the soul of a Christian in sin, or his body in the grave.

30. As for *God, his way* is *perfect: the word of the* LORD *is tried: he* is *a buckler to all those that trust in him.*

The "way" of God is the course of his proceedings with men, and its "perfection" consists in the equity of those proceedings; the promises made in "the word of Jehovah" to his servants, are "tried" in times of affliction and persecution, as gold in the fire, and found pure from any dross of deceit, or fallibility: he is ever a "shield" to protect "those who "trust in him," during their stay here, until he becomes their "exceeding great reward" hereafter. All this he has been to the Head, in order that he may be all this to the members, of the church.

31. *For who* is *God, save the* LORD? *Or who* is *a rock, save our God?*

"Jehovah" alone is the "God," or covenanted Saviour, of his people; he is the only "rock," on which they may securely build their hope of heaven. Vain were the idols of the ancient world, Baal and Jupiter; as vain are those of modern times, Pleasure, Honour, and Profit. They cannot bestow content, or make their votaries happy below; much less can they deliver from death, or open the everlasting doors above.

32. It is *God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

In this and the following verses are enumerated the gifts of God to the spiritual warrior, whereby he is armed and prepared for the battle, after the ex-

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ample of his victorious leader. God invests him with "strength," or what the apostle calls "the spirit of "might in the inner man," as the loins of a soldier are braced by the military girdle; whence that of St. Paul, "having your loins girts about with truth." He removes every thing that may impede his progress, until he has accomplished his warfare, and finished his course in righteousness, which seems to be what is meant by "making his way perfect."

33. *He maketh my feet like hinds'* feet, *and setteth me upon my high places.*

He endueth the affections, which are the feet of the soul, with vigour and agility, to run the way of his commandments, to surmount every obstacle, and, with an activity like that of the swift hart, or the bounding roe, to conquer the steep ascent of the everlasting hills, and gain the summit of the heavenly mountain. St. Paul tells us how the feet must be shod, for this purpose, namely, "with the prepara-"tion of the Gospel of peace."

34. *He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*

He communicates a wisdom and a power which nothing can withstand, instructing and enabling the combatant to overcome in the conflict, to seize and render useless the weapons of the adversary. St. Paul puts into the Christian warrior's hand, "the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

35. *Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness,* or, *thy afflictions, have made me great.*

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The salvation of God is a defence against all temptations, to such as believe in it; whence St. Paul styles this piece of armour, the shield of FAITH, "wherewith," says he, "ye may be able to quench "all the fiery darts of the devil." The "right hand" of God must support and sustain us at all times; and the wholesome discipline of the Christian camp, the chastisements and corrections of our heavenly Father, must train us up to true greatness, and prepare us for the kingdom of heaven. The soldiers, like their great Leader, must be "made perfect "through sufferings."

36. *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that, or, and, my feet did not slip.*

In other words, God had opened a free course for him to victory and triumph, and had also endued him with strength to run that course; thus removing the two mischievous effects of sin, which not only precluded the way to heaven, but deprived us of the ability to travel in it.

37. *I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them; neither did I turn again till they were consumed.* 38. *I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.*

If we suppose David in his conquests to have prefigured victorious Messiah, then have we, in these and the subsequent verses, a sublime description of that vengeance which Jesus, after his resurrection and ascension, inflicted on his hardened and impenitent enemies. His wrath "pursued" and "overtook" them, in the day of visitation; nor did it return, till like a devouring fire, it had "consumed" the prey.

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The Jews were cast down, "not able to rise," or lift up themselves as a people, being crushed under the feet of the once-despised and insulted Nazarene. Let us reflect upon the impotence of our spiritual adversaries, when Jesus declares war against them; and let us beseech him to conquer them in us, as he has conquered them for us.

39. *For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle; thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.* 40. *Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.*

With the almighty power of the Godhead was Jesus invested, by which all enemies were subdued unto him; the stiff "necks" of his crucifiers were bowed under him, and utter destruction became the portion of those who hated him, and had "sent after "him, saying, We will not have this man to reign "over us." So gird us thy soldiers and servants, O Lord Jesu, to the battle, and subdue under us, by the power of thy grace, those that rise up against us, whether they be our own corrupt desires, or the malicious spirits of darkness; so give us, like another Joshua, the "*necks*" of these our enemies, that we may destroy them that hate, and would destroy us.

41. *They cried, but* there was *none to save* them; even *unto the* LORD, *but he answered them not.*

Never was there a more just and lively portrait of the lamentable and desperate state of the Jews, when their calamities came upon them. "They cried, "but—none to save!" They had rejected him who alone could save, and who was now about to destroy

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them. They cried to Jehovah; and thought themselves still his favourite nation; but Jehovah and Jesus were one; so that after putting the latter from them, they could not retain the former on their side. "He answered them not!" It was too late to knock, when the door was shut; too late to cry for mercy, when it was the time of justice. Let us knock, while yet the door may be opened; and not begin to pray, when prayer shall be no longer heard.

42. *Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.*

The nature of that judgement which was executed upon the Jews, cannot be more accurately delineated than by the two images here made use of. They were broken in pieces and dispersed over the face of the earth by the breath of God's displeasure, like "dust before the wind; and as dirt in the streets, "they were cast out," to be trodden under foot by all nations. O that every nation would so consider, as to avoid their crime and their punishment!

43. *Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people,* and *thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people* whom *I have not known shall serve me.*

If David was delivered from the strivings of the people; if the adjacent heathen nations were added to his kingdom, and a "people, whom he had not "known, served him;" how much more was this the case of the Son of David, when he was "deliver-"ed," by his resurrection, from the power of all his enemies; when he was made "head of the heathen,"

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of whom, after their conversion, his church was, and to this day is, composed; and when, instead of the rejected Jews, a people, to whom before he had not been known, became his servants!

44. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.
45. The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.

"As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me;" hereby is intimated the readiness with which the Gentiles should flow into the church, upon the preaching of the Gospel to them, when the Jews, after having so long and so often heard it, had nailed Christ to the cross, and driven the apostles out from among them. "The strangers shall submit themselves unto "me;" the nations who were "aliens from the com-"monwealth of Israel, and strangers to the cove-"nants of promise," either cordially submitted to the sceptre of Christ, or at least dissembled their hostility, and yielded a feigned submission (for so the word כחש sometimes signifies); "the strangers "shall fade away;" that is, such of them as set themselves against me, shall find their strength blasted and withered as a leaf in autumn, and shall fall at the sound of my name and my victories; "they shall "be afraid out of their close places;" or rather, "they shall come trembling from their strong holds," as places not able to protect them, and therefore they will sue for peace. Such seems to be the import of these two verses, which therefore denote the conquest of Messiah to have been every way complete. And accordingly, in the remaining part of the Psalm, the

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church, through Christ her Head, blesseth Jehovah for the same.

46. *The* LORD *liveth; and blessed* be *my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.* 47. It is *God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.* 48. *He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me above those that rise up against me; thou hast delivered me from the violent man.*

In other words, "And now, the Lord God omnipotent liveth and reigneth, for ever blessed and exalted, as the God of salvation: by whom I am avenged of those who persecuted me, and am advanced to empire; my enemies are fallen, and my throne is established." Thus we learn to trust in Jehovah without fear, when our enemies are victorious, and to glorify him without reserve, when we are so.

49. *Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O* LORD, *among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.*

Remarkable is the manner in which St. Paul cites this verse, Rom. xv. 9. The context runs thus: "Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy, as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." This verse is by the apostle produced as a proof, that the Gentiles were one day to glorify God, for the mercy vouchsafed them by Jesus Christ. But, according to

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the letter of the passage, king David only says, that he will give "thanks unto God among the heathen," on account of his own deliverance, and exaltation to the throne of Israel; for upon that occasion we know that he composed and sung the Psalm. This citation brought by St. Paul, cannot therefore be to the purpose for which it is brought, unless the Psalm have a double sense; unless God be glorified in it for the victory and inthronization of Christ, as well as for those of David; and this cannot be, unless the same words, which literally celebrate the one, do likewise prophetically celebrate the other; unless David be a figure of Christ, and speak in his person, and in that of his body, the church. While this Psalm is used as a Christian hymn, in the Gentile Christian church, David still continues, as he foresaw he should do, "to give thanks unto Jehovah, to glorify God "among the Gentiles," for the mercies of redemption, and to "sing praises unto his name*."

50. *Great deliverance giveth he to his King: and showeth mercy to his Anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.*

"Great deliverance giveth he unto his King;" to king David, in saving him from Saul, and his other temporal enemies, and seating him on the earthly throne of Israel; to King Messiah, in rescuing him from death and the grave, and exalting him to an

"* This verse is applied in Rom. xv. 9, to the calling of the "Gentiles unto the faith of Christ, and praise unto God *there-* "*fore*. By which we are taught, that of *Christ* and *his* kingdom "this Psalm is CHIEFLY intended." Ainsworth.

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heavenly throne, as Head of the church: "and "showeth mercy to his anointed;" to him who was anointed outwardly, and in a figure, with oil; and to him who was anointed inwardly, and in truth, with the Holy Ghost and with power: "to David, and "to his seed for evermore;" to the literal David, and to his royal progeny, of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came; and to Christ himself, the spiritual David, the beloved of God, with all those who, through faith, become his children, the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life.

FOURTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XIX.

ARGUMENT.

In the former part of this beautiful Psalm, ver. 1—6. the heavens are represented as the instructors of mankind; the subject, the universality, and the manner of their instructions are pointed out; the glory, beauty, and powerful effects of the solar light are described. The latter part of the Psalm, 7—14. contains an encomium on the word of God, in which its properties are enumerated; and a prayer of the Psalmist for pardoning and restraining grace, and for the acceptance of these and all other his devotions and meditations. From a citation which St. Paul hath made of the 4th verse, it appears, that, in the exposition, we are to raise our thoughts from things natural to things spiritual;

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we are to contemplate the publication of the Gospel, the manifestation of the Light of Life, the Sun of Righteousness, and the efficacy of evangelical doctrine. In this view the ancients have considered the Psalm, and the church hath therefore appointed it to be read on Christmas-day.

1. *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.*

Under the name of "heaven, or "the heavens," is comprehended that fluid mixture of light and air which is every where diffused about us; and to the influence of which are owing all the beauty and fruitfulness of the earth, all vegetable and animal life, and the various kinds of motion throughout the system of nature. By their manifold and beneficial operations, therefore, as well as by their beauty and magnificence, "the heavens declare the glory of God;" they point Him out to us, who, in Scripture language, is styled "the glory of God; by whom themselves and all other things were made, and are upholden; and who is the author of every grace and blessing to the sons of men: "the firmament," or expansion of the celestial elements, wherever it extends, "showeth his handiwork," not only as the Creator, but likewise as the Redeemer, of the world. And thus do the heavens afford inexhaustible matter for contemplation and devotion, to the philosopher and to the Christian.

2. *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.*

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The labours of these our instructors know no intermission, but they continue incessantly to lecture us in the science of divine wisdom. There is one glory of the sun, which shines forth by day; and there are other glories of the moon and of the stars, which become visible by night. And because day and night interchangeably divide the world between them, they are therefore represented as transmitting in succession, each to other, the task enjoined them, like the two parts of a choir, chanting forth alternately the praises of God. How does inanimate nature reproach us with our indolence and indevotion!

3. There is *no speech nor language* where *their voice is not heard.*

Our translators, by the words inserted in a different character, have declared the sense of this passage to be, that there is no nation or language, whither the instruction diffused by the heavens doth not reach. But as the same thought is so fully expressed in the next verse, "Their sound is gone out," &c. it seems most advisable to adhere to the original, which runs literally thus: "No speech, no words, "their voice is not heard;" that is, although the heavens are thus appointed to teach, yet it is not by articulate sounds that they do it; they are not endowed, like man, with the faculty of speech; but they address themselves to the mind of the intelligent beholder in another way, and that, when understood, a no less forcible way, the way of picture or representation. So manifold is the wisdom of God; so various are the ways by which he communicates it to men.

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4. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

The instruction which the heavens disperse abroad is universal as their substance, which extends itself in "lines," or rays, "over all the earth;" by this means their "words," or rather, their "*significant "actions" and operations, are every where present, even "to the ends of the world;" and thereby they preach to all nations the power and wisdom, the mercy and loving kindness of the Lord. The apostles' commission was the same with that of the heavens; and St. Paul (Rom. x. 18.) has applied the natural images of this verse to the manifestation of the Light of Life, by the sermons of those who were sent forth for that purpose. He is speaking of those Jews who had not obeyed the Gospel. "But I say," argues he, "have they not heard? Yes, verily, their "sound went into all the earth, and their words unto "the ends of the world." As if he had said, They must have heard, since the apostles were commanded not to turn unto the Gentiles, till they had published their glad tidings throughout Judea; but the knowledge of him is now become universal, and all flesh has seen the Glory of the Lord; the Light Divine, like that in the heavens, has visited the whole world, as the prophet David foretold, in the xixth Psalm. The apostle cannot be supposed to have made use of this Scripture in a sense of accommoda-

* מליהם—The verb מלל (whence מלי words) is used for expressing the meaning by *signs*. It has this sense, Prov. vi. 13. מולל ברגלו, speaking *with his foot*.

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tion only, because he cites it among other texts which he produces merely as prophecies. And if such be its meaning, if the heavens thus declare the Glory of God, and this is the great lesson they are incessantly teaching; what other language do they speak than that their Lord is the representative of ours, the bright ruler in the natural world of the more glorious one in the spiritual, their sun of the "Sun of Righ-"teousness?" But of this the following verses will lead us to speak more particularly.

5. *In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which* is *as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber*, and *rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*

In the centre of the heavens there is a tent pitched by the Creator for the residence of that most glorious of inanimate substances, the solar light: from thence it issues with the beauty of a bridegroom, and the vigour of a champion, to run its course, and perform its operations. A tabernacle, in like manner, was prepared for him, who saith of himself, "I am "the LIGHT of the world:" John viii. 12. And as the light of the sun goes out in the morning with inconceivable activity, new and youthful itself, and communicating life and gaiety to all things around it, like a bridegroom, in the marriage-garment, from his chamber to his nuptials; so, at his incarnation, did the Light Divine, the promised bridegroom, visit his church, being clad himself, and clothing her, with that robe of righteousness which is styled, in holy Scripture, the marriage-garment; and the joy which his presence administered, was, like the benefits of it, universal. And as the material light is always ready

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to run its heavenly race, daily issuing forth with renewed vigour, like an invincible champion still fresh to labour; so likewise did HE rejoice to run his glorious race: he excelled in strength, and his works were great and marvellous; he triumphed over the powers of darkness; he shed abroad on all sides his bright beams upon his church; he became her deliverer, her protector and support; and showed himself able in every respect to accomplish for her the mighty task he had undertaken. What a marvellous instrument of the Most High is the sun at his rising, considered in this view!

6. *His going forth* is *from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*

The light diffused on every side from its fountain, extendeth to the extremities of heaven, filling the whole circle of creation, penetrating even to the inmost substances of grosser bodies, and acting in and through all other matter, as the general cause of life and motion. Thus unbounded and efficacious, was the influence of the Sun of Righteousness, when he sent out his word, enlightening and enlivening all things by the glory of his grace. His celestial rays, like those of the sun, took their circuit round the earth; they went forth out of Judea into all parts of the habitable world, and there was no corner of it so remote as to be without the reach of their penetrating and healing power. "The Lord gave the word, "great was the company of those that published it:" Ps. lxviii. 11. It was the express declaration of our Saviour himself, "This Gospel of the kingdom shall

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"be preached in all the world, for a witness unto "all nations, and then shall the end come:" Matt. xxiv. 14. And St. Paul affirms, that the Gospel was "come unto all the world, and had been preached "to every creature under heaven:" Col. i. 6. and 23. The prophet, therefore, having thus foretold the mission of the apostles, and the success of their ministry, proceeds in the next place, to describe their "doctrine;" so that what follows is a fine encomium upon the Gospel, written with all the simplicity peculiar to the sacred language, and in a strain far surpassing the utmost efforts of human eloquence.

7. *The law,* or, *doctrine, of the* LORD is *perfect, converting,* or, *restoring, the soul: the testimony of the* LORD is *sure, making wise the simple.*

The word of God, in this and the following verses, has several most valuable properties ascribed to it. It is perfectly well adapted, in every particular, to "convert," to restore, to bring back "the soul" from error to truth, from sin to righteousness, from sickness to health, from death to life; as it convinces of sin, it holds forth a Saviour; it is a means of grace, and a rule of conduct. It giveth wisdom, and by wisdom stability, to those who might otherwise, through ignorance and weakness, be easily deceived and led astray; "it is sure," certain and infallible in its directions and informations, "making wise the "simple."

8. *The statutes of the* LORD are *right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the* LORD is *pure, enlightening the eyes.*

To those who study the righteousness of God

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therein communicated to man, it becometh a never-failing source of consolation and holy joy; the conscience of the reader is cleansed by the blood, and rectified by the Spirit, of Christ; and such a conscience is a continual feast: "the statutes of the "LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." The divine word resembleth the light in its brightness and purity, by which are unveiled and manifested to the eyes of the understanding, the wonderful works and dispensations of God, the state of man, the nature of sin, the way of salvation, the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell: "the commandment of the LORD "is pure, enlightening the eyes."

9. *The fear of the* LORD *is clean, enduring for ever: the judgements of the* LORD *are true* and *righteous altogether.*

"The fear of the LORD;" which restrains from transgressing that law by which it is bred in the heart, is in its effect a preservative of mental purity, and in the duration both of its effect and its reward eternal; it "endureth for ever." "The judge-"ments of the LORD are" not, like those of men, oftentimes wrong and unjust, but all his determinations in his word are "truth and righteousness "united" in perfection.

10. *More to be desired* are they *than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb.*

What wonder is it, that this converting, instructing, exhilarating, enlightening, eternal, true, and righteous word, should be declared preferable to the riches of eastern kings, and sweeter to the soul of the

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pious believer, than the sweetest thing we know of is to the bodily taste? How ready we are to acknowledge all this! Yet, the next hour perhaps, we part with the true riches to obtain the earthly mammon, and barter away the joys of the spirit for the gratifications of sense! Lord, give us affections towards thy word in some measure proportioned to its excellence; for we can never love too much what we can never admire enough.

11. *Moreover by them is thy servant warned;* and *in keeping them* there is *great reward.*

The Psalmist here bears his own testimony to the character above given of the divine word; as if he had said, The several parts of this perfect law, hereafter to be published to the whole race of mankind, have been all along my great instructors, and the only source of all the knowledge to which thy servant hath attained; and I am fully assured, that the blessed fruit of them, when they are duly observed, and have their proper effect, is exceeding glorious, even eternal life.

12. *Who can understand* his *errors? Cleanse thou me from secret* faults.

The perfection and spirituality of God's law render it almost impossible for a fallen son of Adam even to know all the innumerable instances of his transgressing it. Add to which, that false principles and inveterate prejudices make us regard many things as innocent, and some things as laudable, which, in the eye of heaven, are far otherwise. Self-examination is a duty which few practise as they ought to do: and he who practises it best, will always have reason to

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conclude his particular confessions with this general petition, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults!"

13. *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous* sins; *let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*

In the preceding verse, David had implored God's pardoning grace, to cleanse him from the secret sins of ignorance and infirmity: in this he begs his restraining grace, to keep him back from presumptuous sins, or sins committed knowingly, deliberately, and with a high hand, against the convictions and the remonstrances of conscience: he prays that such sins might not "have dominion over him," or that he might not, by contracting evil habits, become the slave of an imperious lust, which might at length lead him on to "the great transgression," to rebellion, and final apostasy from God; for he who would be innocent from the "great transgression," must beware of indulging himself in any.

14. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O* LORD, *my strength, and my redeemer.*

The Prophet, having before solicited the justification of his person through grace, concludes with a petition for the acceptance of all his offerings, and more especially of these his meditations, at the hands of that Blessed One, whom he addresses as the author of all good, and the deliverer from all evil; as the "strength" and the "Redeemer" of his people*.

* If the reader shall have received any pleasure from perusing the comment on the foregoing Psalm, especially the first part of

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PSALM XX.

ARGUMENT.

1—4. The church prayeth for the prosperity of King Messiah, going forth to the battle, as her champion and deliverer; for his acceptance by the Father, and for the accomplishment of his will. 5, 6, 7. She declareth her full assurance of faith, and her resolution to trust in him alone, and not in the arm of flesh. 8. She foreseeth the fall of her enemies, and her own exaltation; and, 9. concludeth with a prayer to the God of her strength.

1. *The* LORD *hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.*

This may be considered as the address of a people to their king, when he goeth forth to the battle against their enemies. But it is to be regarded, in a more general and useful view, as the address of the church to Christ her king, in "the day of his trouble." She prayeth for the happy accomplishment of his

it, he is to be informed, that he stands indebted on that account to a Discourse entitled, CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, published in the year 1750, by the late reverend Mr. GEORGE WATSON, for many years the dear companion and kind director of the author's studies; in attending to whose agreeable and instructive conversation, he has often passed whole days together, and shall always have reason to number them among the best-spent days of his life; whose death he can never think of without lamenting it afresh; and to whose memory he embraces, with pleasure, this opportunity to pay the tribute of a grateful heart.

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warfare, "through the name of the God of Jacob," dwelling in him. And his warfare, though accomplished in his own person, still remaineth to be accomplished in his people, until the last enemy shall be destroyed, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. It is still "the day of trouble;" still "the "the name of the God of Jacob must defend" the body of Christ.

2. *Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Sion.*

All help and strength, in the time of danger and sorrow must be obtained by prayer from the heavenly Sion which is in the Jerusalem above, and from the eternal temple thereon constructed. By this "help "and strength," the Captain of our salvation conquered; and the church, with all her sons, must conquer through the same.

3. *Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice.*

As Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up, not only prayers and tears, but, at length, his own most precious body and blood; the church here prays, that the great propitiatory sacrifice may be had in everlasting remembrance before God, and the merits of it be continually pleaded in arrest of judgement, and accepted for herself and her children.

4. *Grant thee, according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.*

The desire of Christ's heart, and the counsel of his will, was, that he might die for our sins, and rise again for our justification; that the Gospel might be preached, the Gentiles called, the Jews converted,

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the dead raised, and the elect glorified. That this his "desire might be granted," and this his "coun-"sel be fulfilled," the church of old prayed; and the church now prayeth for the accomplishment of that which yet remains to be accomplished.

5. *We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up* our *banners: the* LORD *fulfil all thy petitions.*

The joy of the church is in the salvation of Christ; and the joy of every individual is in the application of that salvation to himself, and all around him. In the name of Jesus, and under the banner of the cross, the armies of the faithful undertake and carry on all their enterprises against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The prospect of the glorious fruits of Christ's victory, caused the church to redouble her prayers, that he might be heard in his "petitions" for mankind, and might see of the travail of his soul.

6. *Now know I, that the* LORD *saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven, with the saving strength of his right hand.*

The assurance of the ancient church was built on the prophecies going before concerning the salvation of Messiah. Our assurance is strengthened by the actual performance of so great a part of the counsel of God. We know that the LORD has "saved his "Anointed;" that his Anointed saveth all, who believe and obey him, from their sins; and therefore, we doubt not, but that, "by the strength of his right "hand," or by the excellency of his power, he will finally save them from death, and rescue them from the grave.

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7. *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the* LORD *our God.*

This should be the resolution of every Christian king and people, in the day of battle. And, in the spiritual war, in which we are all engaged, the first and necessary step to victory is, to renounce all confidence in the wisdom and strength of nature and the world; and to remember, that we can do nothing, but in the name, by the merits, through the power, and for the sake, of Jesus Christ, our LORD and our God.

8. *They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright.*

This was eminently the case, when the pride and power of Jewish infidelity and Pagan idolatry fell before the victorious sermons and lives of the humble believers in Jesus: this is the case in every conflict with our spiritual enemies, when we engage them in the name, the spirit, and the power of Christ; and this will be the case at the last day, when the world, with the prince of it, shall be brought down, and "fall; but we, risen" from the dead, through the resurrection of our Lord, shall "stand upright" in the courts of heaven, and sing the praises of him who getteth us all our victories.

9. *Save,* LORD: *let the King hear us when we call.*

Thus the Psalm concludes, as it began, with a general "Hosanna" of the church, praying for the prosperity and success of the then future Messiah, and for her own salvation in him, her king: who, from the grave and gate of death, was, for this end,

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to be exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, that he might hear, and present to his Father, the prayers of his people, "when they call "upon him."

PSALM XXI.

ARGUMENT.

This is one of the proper Psalms which the church hath appointed to be used on Ascension-day, and wherein, 1—6. she celebrates the victory of her Redeemer, and the glory consequent thereupon; she prophesies, 7. the stability of his kingdom, and, 8—12. the destruction of the enemies thereof; concluding with a prayer for his final triumph and exaltation; the celebration of which, with everlasting hallelujahs, will be her employment in heaven.

1. *The King shall joy in thy strength, O* LORD; *and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!*

The joy of Christ himself, after his victory, is in the strength and salvation of Jehovah, manifested thereby. Such ought to be the joy of his disciples, when God hath enabled them to vanquish their enemies, either temporal or spiritual; in which latter case, as they are called kings, and said to reign with Christ, so they are in duty bound to acknowledge that they reign by him: "He that glorieth," whatever the occasion be, "let him glory in the LORD.

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2. *Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips.*

The desire of Christ's heart was his own resurrection and exaltation, for the benefit of his church; and now he ever liveth to make "request with his lips," for the conversion and salvation of sinners. Such desires will be granted, and such requests will never be withholden. Let us be careful to frame ours, after that all-perfect model of divine love.

3. *For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness; thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.*

The Son of God could not be more ready to ask for the blessings of the divine goodness, than the Father was to give them: and his disposition is the same towards all his adopted sons. Christ, as king and priest, weareth a crown of glory, represented by the purest and most resplendent of metals, gold. He is pleased to esteem his saints, excelling in different virtues, as the rubies, the sapphires, and the emeralds, which grace and adorn that crown. Who would not be ambitious of obtaining a place therein!

4. *He asked life of thee,* and *thou gavest it him,* even *length of days for ever and ever.*

The life, asked by Christ, was not a continuance in this valley of tears, but that new and eternal life consequent upon a resurrection from the dead. For thus his petition was granted in "length of days for "ever and ever." "He died no more; death had no "more dominion over him." Whose disciples then are they that wish only to have their days prolonged

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upon the earth, forgetful of the life which is hid with Christ in God?

5. *His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.*

What tongue can express the "glory, honour, and "majesty," with which the King of righteousness and peace was invested, upon his ascension; when he took possession of the throne prepared for him, and received the homage of heaven and earth! The sacred imagery in St. John's Revelation sets them before our eyes in such a manner, that no one can read the description, whose heart will not burn within him, through impatient desire to behold them. See Rev. chap. iv. vii. xix. xxi. xxii.

6. *For thou hast made him most blessed,* Heb. *set him to be blessings*, for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.*

Christ, by his death and passion, having removed the curse, became the fountain of all blessings to his people, in time and eternity; being himself the blessing promised to Abraham, and the object of the patriarchal benedictions. The joy communicated to the humanity of our Lord, from the divine nature, shall be shed abroad on all his saints, when admitted to view the "countenance of God" in the face of Jesus Christ. Then they shall enter into "the joy of "their Lord."

7. *For the King trusteth in the* LORD, *and*

* "Nam posuisti eum in secula benedicendum." Houbigant. Compare Gen. xii. 2. Bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations.

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through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.

The throne of Christ, as a man, was erected and established, by his trust and confidence in the Father, during his humiliation and passion. Faith in God, therefore, is the way that leadeth to honour and stability. "Look at the generations of old, and see: "did ever any trust in the Lord, and was con-"founded?" Ecclus. ii. 10.

8. *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies; thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.*

The same right hand of Jehovah is glorious in power to save his people, and to destroy his enemies; to convert the Gentiles, and to crush the Jews; to exalt the faithful to heaven, and cast down the unbelieving to hell: neither is there any treason against the King of heaven, which shall not be dragged forth into the light, made manifest, judged, and condemned. Let thy hand, O Lord, be upon our sins to destroy them; but upon us, to save us.

9. *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the* LORD *shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.*

"The time of God's anger" often begins in this life, especially towards the close of it, when an evil conscience within, like flame confined in an "oven," torments the sinner, as a prelude to punishments future and unknown, which the "wrath" of God is preparing to inflict on the incorrigible and impenitent. Let us so meditate on this sad scene, that we may have no part in it.

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10. *Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.*

A day is coming, when all the "fruits" of sin, brought forth by sinners, in their words, their writings, and their actions, shall be "destroyed;" yea, the tree itself, which had produced them, shall be rooted up, and cast into the fire. The "seed" and posterity of the wicked, if they continue in the way of their forefathers, will be punished like them. Let parents consider, that upon their principles and practices may depend the salvation or destruction of multitudes after them. The case of the Jews, daily before their eyes, should make them tremble.

11. *For they intended evil against thee; they imagined a mischievous device,* which *they are not able to perform.*

Vengeance came upon the Jews to the uttermost, because of their intended malice against Christ. They, like Joseph's brethren, "thought evil against "him;" but "they were not able to perform it;" "for God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as "it is this day, to save much people alive:" Gen. l. 20. So let all the designs of ungodly men against thy church, O Lord, through thy power of bringing good out of evil, turn to her advantage: and let all men be convinced, that no weapon formed against thee can prosper.

12. *Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back,* or, *thou shalt set them as a butt,* when *thou shalt make ready* thine arrows *upon thy strings against the face of them.*

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The judgements of God are called his "arrows," being sharp, swift, sure, and deadly. What a dreadful situation, to be set as a mark, and "butt," at which these arrows are directed! View Jerusalem encompassed by the Roman armies without, and torn to pieces by the animosity of desperate and bloody factions within. No farther commentary is requisite upon this verse. "Tremble, and repent," is the inference to be drawn by every Christian community under heaven, in which appear the symptoms of degeneracy and apostasy.

13. *Be thou exalted,* LORD, *in thine own strength; so will we sing, and praise thy power.*

The church concludes with a joyful acclamation to her Redeemer, wishing for his "exaltation in his "own strength," as God, who was to be abased in much weakness, as man. We still continue to wish and pray for his exaltation over sin, in the hearts of his people by grace, and finally over death, in their bodies, by his glorious power at the resurrection. The triumph over sin we sing in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, upon earth; that over death, we shall praise with everlasting hallelujahs, in heaven.

FOURTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, which the church hath appointed to be used on Good Friday, as our Lord uttered the

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first verse of it when hanging on the cross, consisteth of two parts. The former, 1—21. treateth of the passion; the latter, 22—31. celebrateth the resurrection of Jesus, with its effects. 1, 2. He complaineth of being forsaken; 3—6. acknowledgeth the holiness of the Father, and pleadeth the former deliverances of the church; 6—8. describeth his humiliation, with the taunts and reproaches of the Jews; 9—11. expresseth his faith, and prayeth for help; 12—18. particularizeth his sufferings; 19—21. repeateth his supplications; 22—25. declareth his resolution to praise the Father for his deliverance, and exhorteth his church to do the same; 26—31. prophesieth the conversion of the Gentile world to the faith and worship of the true God.

1. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* why art thou so *far from helping me*, and from *the words of my roaring?*

Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, when hanging on the cross, complained in these words, that he was deprived, for a time, of the divine presence and comforting influence, while he suffered for our sins. If the master thus underwent the trial of a spiritual desertion, why doth the disciple think it strange, unless the light of heaven shine continually upon his tabernacle? Let us comfort ourselves, in such circumstances, with the thought, that we are thereby

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conformed to the image of our dying Lord, that sun which set in a cloud, to arise without one.

2. *O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

Even our Lord himself, as man, prayed, "that if "it were possible, the cup might pass from him;" but God had ordained otherwise, for his own glory, and for man's salvation. "Day and night," in prosperity and adversity, living and dying, let us not be "silent," but cry for deliverance; always remembering to add, as Christ did, "Nevertheless, not my "will, but thine be done." Nor let any man be impatient for the return of his prayers, since every petition preferred even by the Son of God himself was not granted.

3. *But thou* art *holy,* O thou *that inhabitest the praises of Israel* *.

Whatever befalleth the members of the church, the Head thereof here teacheth them to confess the justice and holiness of God in all his proceedings; and to acknowledge, that whether he exalteth or humbleth his people, he is to be praised and glorified by them.

4. *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.*

"Trust" in God is the way to "deliverance," and the former instances of the divine favour are so many arguments why we should hope for the same; but

* Or, perhaps, as bishop Lowth renders it, "Thou that in-"habitest תהלות ישראל, the irradiations, the glory of Israel." See Merrick's Annotations on the Psalms, p. 43.

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it may not always be vouchsafed, when we expect it. The patriarchs and Israelites of old were often saved from their enemies: the holy Jesus is left to languish and expire under the malice of his. God knows what is proper for him to do, and for us to suffer; we know neither. This consideration is an anchor for the afflicted soul, sure and steadfast.

5. *They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.*

No argument is of more force with God, than that which is founded upon an appeal to his darling attribute of mercy, and to the manifestation of it formerly made to persons in distress; for which reason it is here repeated, and dwelt upon. They who would obtain grace to help, in time of need, must "cry" as well as "trust." The "prayer of faith" is mighty with God, and (if we may use the expression) overcometh the Omnipotent.

6. *But I* am *a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people.*

He who spareth all other men, spared not his own Son; he spared not him, that he might spare them. The Redeemer of the world scrupled not to compare himself, in his state of humiliation, to the lowest reptile which his own hand had formed, a "worm," humble, silent, innocent, overlooked, oppressed, and trodden under foot. Let the sight of this reptile teach us humility.

7, 8. *All they that see me, laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head,* saying, *He trusted on the* LORD, that *he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

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This was literally fulfilled, when Messiah hung upon the cross, and the priests and elders used the very words that had been put into their mouths, by the spirit of prophecy, so long before. Matt. xxvii. 41—43. "The chief priests mocking him, with "the scribes and elders, said, He trusted in God; "let him deliver him now, if he will have him." O the wisdom and foreknowledge of God! the infatuation and blindness of man! The same are too often the sentiments of those who live in times, when the church and her righteous cause, with their advocates, are under the cloud of persecution, and seem to sink beneath the displeasure of the powers of the world. But such do not believe, or do not consider, that, in the Christian economy, death is followed by a resurrection, when it will appear, that God forsaketh not them that are his, but they are preserved for ever.

9, 10. *But thou* art *he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope,* when I was *upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou* art *my God from my mother's belly.*

This was eminently the case of Christ, who was the Son of God in a sense in which no other man ever was. But in him we are all children of God by adoption; we are all in the hands of a gracious Providence from the womb; and into those hands must we commend ourselves, when about to depart hence. To whom else, then, should we have recourse, for support and consolation, in the day of calamity and sorrow?

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11. *Be not far from me, for trouble* is *near; for* there is *none to help me.*

From the foregoing considerations, namely, from the holiness of God, ver. 3. from the salvation vouchsafed to the people of old time, ver. 4, 5. from the low estate to which Messiah was reduced, ver. 6, 7, 8. and from the watchful care of the Father over him, since his miraculous birth, ver. 9, 10. from all these considerations, he enforceth his petition for help, during his unparalleled sufferings, when "all "forsook him, and fled." Let us treasure up these things in our hearts, against the hour when "trou-"ble shall be near, and there shall be none to help;" when all shall forsake us, but God, our consciences, and our prayers.

12, 13. *Many bulls have compassed me: strong* bulls *of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me* with *their mouths,* as *a ravening and a roaring lion.*

From the 11th verse to the 19th the sufferings of the holy Jesus are described, in terms partly figurative, and partly literal. A lamb, in the midst of wild "bulls and lions," is a very lively representation of his meekness and innocence, and of the noise and fury of his implacable enemies. "Bashan" was a fertile country, Numb. xxxii. 4. and the cattle there fed were fat and "strong." Deut. xxxii. 15. Like them, the Jews, in that good land, "waxed fat, and "kicked," grew proud and rebelled; "forsook God "that made them, and lightly esteemed the rock of "their salvation." Let both communities and indi-

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viduals, when blessed with peace, plenty, and prosperity in the world, take sometimes into consideration this flagrant instance of their being abused; with the final consequence of such abuse.

14, 15. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, or, sundered: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

For our sakes Christ yielded himself, like "water," without resistance, to the violence of his enemies; suffering his "bones," in which consisteth the strength of the frame, to be distended and dislocated upon the cross; while, by reason of the fire from above, to the burning heat of which this paschal Lamb was exposed, his heart dissolved and melted away. The intenseness of his passion drying up all the fluids, brought on a thirst, tormenting beyond expression; and, at last, laid him low in the grave. Never, blessed Lord, was love like unto thy love! Never was sorrow like unto thy sorrow! Thy spouse and body mystical, the church, is often, in a degree, conformed unto thee; and as thou wert, so is she in this world.

16. *For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.*

Our Lord, who compared himself above, ver. 12. to a lamb in the midst of bulls and lions, here setteth himself forth again under the image of a hart, or hind, roused early in the morning of his mortal life;

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hunted and chased all the day, and in the evening pulled down to the ground, by those who "compassed" and "enclosed" him, thirsting and clamouring for his blood, crying, "Away with him, "away with him! crucify him, crucify him!" And the next step was, the "piercing his hands and his "feet," by nailing them to the cross. How often, O thou Preserver of men, in thy church, thy ministers, and thy word, art thou thus compassed, and thus pierced!

17. *I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*

The skin and flesh were distended, by the posture of the body on the cross, that the bones, as through a thin veil, became visible, and might be counted *; and the holy Jesus, forsaken and stripped, naked and bleeding, was a spectacle to heaven and earth. Look unto him, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the world!

18. *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

"The soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, "took his garments, and made four parts, to every "soldier a part, and also his coat; now the coat was "without seam, woven from the top throughout.

* "Qui macilenti sunt, sic habent ossa prominentia, ut fa-"cile omnia possint tactu secerni et numerari. David, quate-"nus hæc ei conveniunt, dicere hoc potuit de se fuga et mo-"lestiis emaciato. Sed Christus aptius ita loqui poterat, quod "magis emaciatus esset, et corpore nudo atque in cruce dis-"tento, magis adparerent ossa." Le Clerc, cited by bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations.

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"They said therefore among themselves, Let us not "rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that "the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They "parted my raiment among them, and, for my vest "ture they did cast lots." John xix. 23, 24.

19. *But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me.*

The circumstances of the passion being thus related, Christ resumes the prayer, with which the Psalm begins, and which is repeated, ver. 10, 11. The adversary had emptied his quiver, and spent all the venom of his malice; Messiah therefore prayeth for a manifestation of the power and favour of Heaven on his side, in a joyful and glorious resurrection. And to a resurrection from the dead every man will find it necessary to look forward, for comfort.

20, 21. *Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling* from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me,* or, *and hear thou me, from the horns of the unicorns.*

The wrath of God was the "sword," which took vengeance on all men in their representative; it was the "flaming sword," which kept men out of Paradise; the sword, to which it was said, at the time of the passion—"Awake, O sword, against my shep-"herd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith "the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the

* Heb. יחידתי *my united one.* "May it relate to any thing "more than נפש? the human nature united with the Divinity "in the person of Christ? Quære." Bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations.

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"sheep shall be scattered:" Zech. xiii. 7. Matt. xxvi. 31. The ravening fury of the "dog," the "lion," and the "unicorn," or the "oryx," a fierce and untamable creature of the stag kind, is made use of to describe the rage of the devil and his instruments, whether spiritual or corporeal. From all these Christ supplicates the Father for deliverance. How great need have we to supplicate for the same, through him!

22. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

The former part of the Psalm we have seen to be prophetical of the passion. The strain now changes to an epinikion, or hymn of triumph, in the mouth of the Redeemer, celebrating his victory, and its happy consequences. This verse is cited by the apostle, Heb. ii. 11. "Both he that sanctified, and "they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which "cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, "saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren," &c. And accordingly, when the deliverance, so long wished, and so earnestly prayed for, was accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, he "declared the name of God," by his apostles, to all his "brethren;" and caused the church to resound with incessant praises and hallelujahs; all which are here represented as proceeding from the body, by and through him who is the head of that body.

23.* *Ye that fear the* LORD, *praise him; all ye*

* Bishop Lowth is of opinion, that this verse and the following are the "song" of praise, which, in the verse preceding, the speaker says, he will utter "in the congregation." The intro-

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the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

If Christ arose from the dead, to declare salvation to his brethren, and to glorify God for the same, how diligent ought we to be in doing the former; how delighted, in the performance of the latter! Messiah first addressed himself to his ancient people, "the "seed of Jacob," to whom the Gospel was first preached. How long, O Lord, holy and true, shall thy once highly favoured nation continue deaf to this gracious call of thine! "All ye seed of Jacob "glorify him; and fear him all ye seed of Israel."

24. *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*

The great subjects of praise and thanksgiving, in the church, are the sufferings of the lowly and afflicted Jesus, and the acceptance of those sufferings by the Father, as a propitiation for the sins of the world; which acceptance was testified by raising him from the dead; inasmuch as the discharge of the surety proved the payment of the debt. The poor and afflicted brethren of Christ may take comfort from this verse; for if they suffer in his spirit, they will be raised in his glory.

25. *My praise* shall be *of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.*

The vow of Christ was, to build and consecrate

duction of it, as his lordship justly observes, gives a variety to the whole, and is highly poetical. Merrick's Annotations."

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to Jehovah a spiritual temple, in which the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise should be continually offered. This vow he performed after his resurrection, by the hands of his apostles, and still continueth to perform, by those of his ministers, carrying on the work of edification in "the great congregation" of the Gentile Christian Church. The vows of Christ cannot fail of being performed. Happy are they whom he vouchsafeth to use, as his instruments, in the performance of them.

26. *The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the* LORD *that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.*

A spiritual banquet is prepared in the church for the meek and lowly of heart; the bread of life and the wine of salvation are set forth in the word and sacraments; and they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be "satisfied" therewith: they, "who seek" the Lord Jesus in his ordinances, ever find reason to "praise him;" while, nourished by these noble and heavenly viands, they live the life, and work the works of grace, proceeding still forward to glory: when their "heart shall live for ever," in heaven.

27. *All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the* LORD: *and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*

The great truths of man's creation and fall, with the promise of a Redeemer to come, were "forgot-"ten" by the nations, after their apostasy from the true God, and the one true religion; but were, as we may say, recalled to their "remembrance," by the

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sermons of the apostles, and the writings of Moses and the prophets, translated, and spread among them. By these they were converted to the faith, and now compose the holy church universal throughout the world; being the glorious proofs and fruits of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

28. *For the kingdom is the* LORD'S; *and he is the governor among the nations.*

There is good reason why the nations should worship Christ, and throw away their idols; since in his hand, not in theirs, is the government of the world. Upon his ascension he was crowned King of kings, and Lord of lords; he ruleth in the church by his Spirit; and blessed are the hearts, that are his willing subjects in the day of his power.

29. *All* they that be *fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.*

It was said above, ver. 26. "the meek," the poor, and lowly, "shall eat and be satisfied." It is here foretold, that the "fat ones of the earth," the great, the opulent, the flourishing, the nobles and princes of the world, should be called in to partake of the feast, and to "worship" God. Rich, as well as poor, are invited *; and the hour is coming, when all

* They are "invited," but they do not so often accept the invitation. And it must be owned, that דשן ארץ, are generally mentioned in an unfavourable sense. Bishop Lowth is therefore rather inclined to construe the words, as Mr. Fenwick does; all who are "fattened," that is, "fed" and "sustained by the "earth." The expression then intimates the universality of the Gospel, which, the apostle says, "was preached to EVERY

the race of Adam, as many as sleep in the "dust" of the earth, unable to raise themselves from thence, quickened and called forth by the voice of the Son of man, must "bow" the knee to king Messiah.

30. *A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the* LORD *for a generation.*

The apostle informeth us, Rom. ix. 8. that "the "children of the promise are counted for the seed;" that is, the converts to be made, among the nations, by the preaching of the Gospel, according to the promise to Abraham; these were to constitute the church and family of Christ, the "generation" of the faithful; these were to take the place, and enjoy the privileges of the Jews, cut off because of their unbelief. Lord, enable us to serve thee all our lives, with a service acceptable to thee in Christ Jesus; that at the resurrection of the just, we may be numbered in the generation of thy children.

31. *They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done* this.

The promised and expected race shall spring forth at the time appointed, and proclaim the "righteous-"ness," which is of God by faith, to ages and genera-

"CREATURE;" a phrase of similar import. All who would partake the benefits of Christ's passion, must worship him as a Saviour, before they are called upon to adore him as a Judge. The bishop thinks, likewise, that the 29th verse should end with the words, "bow before him;" that the next words in the original should be read, as almost all the ancient versions seems to have read them, ונפשי לו חיה, and rendered—"But my soul "shall live—My seed shall serve him," &c.

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tions yet unborn; who, hearing of that great work, which the Lord shall have wrought, for the salvation of men, will thereby be led to glorify him in the church, for the same to the end of the time.

Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem, rise;
Exalt thy tow'ring head, and lift thy eyes.
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks, on ev'ry side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies.
See barb'rous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend.

MESSIAH.

PSALM XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, the "sheep of God's pasture" address themselves to their great and good SHEPHERD, declaring, 1. their acquiescence and confidence in him; 2. his diligence in feeding them with the food of eternal life; 3. his watchful care in bringing them back from the ways of error, and conducting them in the path of truth; 4. his power in saving them from death; 5. his loving kindness in vouchsafing his spiritual comforts, during their pilgrimage in an enemy's country; and, 6. they express their hope and trust, that a continuation of that loving kindness, will enable them to pass through the vanities and vexations of time, to the blissful glories of eternity.

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1. *The* LORD *is my Shepherd; I shall not want.*

In these words, which one cannot utter without feeling the happiness they were intended to describe, the believer is taught to express his absolute acquiescence and complacency, in the guardian care of the great Pastor of the universe, the Redeemer and Preserver of men. With joy he reflects, that he hath a "Shepherd;" and that that Shepherd is Jehovah, one possessed of all the qualities requisite to constitute the pastoral character in the highest perfection. For where shall we ever find such unexampled diligence, such inexpressible tenderness, such exquisite skill, such all-subduing might, and such unwearied patience? Why should they fear, who have such a friend? How can they "want," who have such a "Shepherd?" Behold us, O Lord Jesu, in ourselves hungry, and thirsty, and feeble, and diseased, and defenceless, and lost. O feed us, and cherish us, and heal us, and defend us, and bear with us, and restore us!

2. *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

The loveliest image afforded by the natural world, is here represented to the imagination; that of a flock, feeding in verdant meadows, and reposing in quietness, by the rivers of water, running gently through them. It is selected, to convey an idea of the provision made for the souls, as well as bodies of men, by His goodness, who "openeth his hand, and "filleth all things living with plenteousness. By "me" saith the Redeemer, "if any man enter in, "he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find

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"pasture:" John x. 9. And what saith the Spirit of peace and comfort? "Let him that is athirst "come; and whosoever will, let him take the water "of life freely:" Rev. xxii. 17. Every flock that we see, should remind us of our necessities; and every pasture should excite us to praise that love by which they are so bountifully supplied.

3. *He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

To "restore," or bring back, those that had "gone "astray," that is, in other words, to "call sinners "to repentance," was the employment of Him who, in the parable of the "lost sheep," representeth himself as executing that part of the pastoral office. By the same kind hand, when "restored," they are thenceforth led in "the path of righteousness;" in the way of holy obedience. Obstructions are removed; they are strengthened, to walk and run in the path of God's commandments; while, to invite and allure them, a crown of glory appears, held forth at the end of it. All this is now done, for, in, by, and through that "name," beside which, there is none other under heaven given unto man, whereby he may be saved.

4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou* art *with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

The sheep here express their confidence in the power of their Shepherd, as sufficient to defend them against the last and most formidable enemy, death himself. To apprehend the scenery in this verse, we must conceive the church militant, and the church

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triumphant, as two mountains, between which lieth the "valley of the shadow of death," necessary to be passed by those who would go from one to the other. Over all that region of dreariness and desolation, extendeth the empire of the king of terrors: and the believer alone "feareth no evil," in his passage through it; because he is conducted by "that great "Shepherd of the sheep, whom God brought again "from the dead:" Heb. xiii. 20. and who can therefore show us the path of life, through the vale of death. In all our dangers and distresses, but chiefly in our last and greatest need, let "thy rod," the sceptre of thy kingdom, O Lord, protect us, and thy pastoral "staff" guide and support our steps; till, through the dreaded valley, we pass to the heavenly mountain, on which St. John saw "the "Lamb standing, with a great multitude, redeemed "from the earth." Rev. xiv. 1.

5. *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

Another set of images, borrowed from a feast, is introduced to give us ideas of those cordials and comforts prepared to cheer and invigorate the fainting soul, while, surrounded by "enemies," it is accomplishing its pilgrimage through life; during which time, its sorrows and afflictions are alleviated and sweetened by the joys and consolations of the Holy One; by the feast of a good conscience; by the bread of life, the "oil" of gladness, and the "cup" of salvation, still full, and "running over."

6. *Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me*

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all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD *for ever.*

Experience of "goodness and mercy," already so often vouchsafed, begets an assurance of their being continued to the end; for nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, if we do not separate ourselves from it. Thus will the Lord, our Saviour, provide for us on earth, and conduct us to heaven; where we shall dwell to "length of days," even the days of eternity, "one fold under one Shepherd:" a fold into which no enemy enters, and from which no friend departs: where we shall rest from all our labours, and see a period to all our sorrows; where the voice of praise and thanksgiving is heard continually; where all the faithful, from Adam to his last-born son, shall meet together, to behold the face of Jesus, and to be blessed with the vision of the Almighty; where "we shall hunger no more, neither "thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, "nor any heat. But the Lamb, which is in the "midst of the throne, shall feed us, and lead us to "living fountains of waters." Rev. vii. 16, 17.

FIFTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

The plan of this Psalm, according to the letter of it, is beautifully delineated by bishop Lowth, in his

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xxviith lecture. The Ark of God is supposed to be moving, in a grand and solemn procession of the whole Israelitish nation, towards the place of its future residence, on mount Sion: see 1 Chron. xv. On ascending the mountain, the Psalm is sung, declaring, 1, 2. the sovereignty of Jehovah over all the earth; describing, 3—6. what the character ought to be of that people whom he had more peculiarly selected, to serve him in the house where his Glory was to dwell, and of which, 7—10. it was now about to take possession. All this is by us to be applied to the Christian church, and the ascension of our Lord into heaven; for which reason, the Psalm is one of those appointed to be used on Ascension-day.

1. *The earth* is *the* LORD'S, *and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*

The God of Israel was Lord of the whole earth, by right of creation. The same Divine Person who created the world, hath since, in Christ, redeemed it; and it is his again, by that right also. But the church Christian is his, in a more peculiar manner, as the church of Israel formerly was. We are doubly bound to adore and to obey him. "It is he that hath made "us, and not we ourselves:" Psal. c. 2. and "we "are not our own, being bought with a price:" 1 Cor. vi. 20. The inference is, "Let us glorify "God in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are," every way, "God's."

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2. *For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.*

The waters which, at the creation, and again at the deluge, overspread all things, being, by the power of God, driven down into the great deep, and there confined, the earth was, in a wonderful manner, constructed and established, as a circular arch, upon or over them. Let us often meditate on this noble subject for contemplation and devotion; that we may learn whither we are to have recourse, when in danger of being overwhelmed by sins or sorrows.

3. *Who shall ascend into the hill of the* LORD? *and who shall stand in his holy place?*

The connexion seems to be this: If the Almighty Creator and Lord of all the earth has chosen us to be his peculiar people, to serve and worship him in his temple, upon the holy hill of Sion, whither the sacred symbol of his presence is now ascending, what manner of persons ought we to be? The reasoning is exactly the same, as bishop Lowth observes, with that of Moses, in Deut. x. 14—16. "Behold the "heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's "thy God; the earth also, with all that therein is. "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers, to love "them; and he chose their seed after them, even "you, above all people, as it is this day. Circum-"cise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no "more stiff-necked." The argument applies, with additional force, to ourselves, as Christians. We compose a far more numerous and magnificent procession than that of the Israelites, when the church universal, with her spiritual services, attends our

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Lord, as it were, upon his ascension, in heart and mind ascending with him into the holy places not made with hands.

4. *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,* or, *placed his trust in vain idols,* or, *in the creature, nor sworn deceitfully.* 5. *He shall receive the blessing from the* LORD, *and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

No man can ascend into heaven through his own righteousness, but he who came down from heaven, and performed a perfect sinless obedience to the will of God. Sinners of old were purified, through faith in him that was to come, by typical offerings and ablutions, before they approached the sanctuary. We have been cleansed from our sins, and renewed unto holiness, by the blood of Christ, and the washing of the Holy Ghost. Thus we become his people: thus we "receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of our salvation."

6. *This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob,* or, *O God of Jacob.*

Such ought the people to be who seek the presence of God, and approach to worship him in the sanctuary; who celebrate the ascension of their Redeemer, and hope, one day, to follow him into those happy mansions, which he is gone before to prepare for them.

7. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.* 8. *Who is the King of Glory?*

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The LORD *strong and mighty, the* LORD *mighty in battle.* 9, 10. The chorus is repeated.

We must now form to ourselves an idea of the Lord of Glory, after his resurrection from the dead, making his entry into the eternal temple in heaven, as of old, by the symbol of his presence, he took possession of that figurative and temporary structure which once stood upon the hill of Sion. We are to conceive him gradually rising, from mount Olivet, into the air, taking the clouds for his chariot, and ascending up on high; while some of the angels, like the Levites in procession, attendant on the triumphant Messiah in the day of his power, demand that those everlasting gates and doors, hitherto shut and barred against the race of Adam, should be thrown open, for his admission into the realms of bliss. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye "lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory "shall come in." On hearing this voice of jubilee and exultation from the earth, the abode of misery and sorrow, the rest of the angels, astonished at the thought of a MAN claiming a right of entrace into their happy regions, ask from within, like the Levites in the temple, "Who is this King of Glory?" To which question the attendant angels answer, in a strain of joy and triumph—and let the church of the redeemed answer with them—"The LORD strong "and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle:" the LORD JESUS, victorious over sin, death, and hell. Therefore we say, and with holy transport we repeat it, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift "up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory

"shall come in." And if any ask, "Who is the "King of Glory?" to heaven and earth we proclaim aloud—"The LORD of Hosts;" all-conquering MESSIAH, Head over every creature, the Leader of the armies of JEHOVAH, "He is the King of Glory." Even so, Glory be to thee, O Lord most High! Amen. Hallelujah.

PSALM XXV.

ARGUMENT.

It is much the same, whether we suppose the church, or any single member thereof, to be speaking throughout this Psalm, and praying, 1—3. for help and protection against spiritual enemies; 4, 5. for knowledge and direction in the way of godliness; pleading for this purpose, 6, 7. God's mercies of old; 8. the perfections of his nature; 9, 10. enumerating the qualifications requisite for scholars in the divine shool; 11. upon the strength of these arguments, enforcing the petition for mercy; 12—14. describing the blessedness of the man who feareth the Lord; 15—21. preferring divers petitions; and 22. closing the whole with one for the final redemption of the Israel of God.

1. *Unto thee, O* LORD, *do I lift up my soul.* 2. *O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed; let not mine enemies triumph over me.*

Cares and pleasures are the weights which press

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the soul down to earth, and fasten her thereto; and it is the spirit of prayer, which must enable her to throw off these weights, to break these cords, and to "lift up" herself to heaven. He who "trusteth" in any thing, but in God, will one day be "ashamed" and confounded, and give his spiritual "enemies" cause "to triumph over him."

3. *Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed, that transgress without a cause*, or, *vainly, rashly.*

God, as a father and a master, will never suffer his children and servants to want his favour and protection; nor will he permit malicious rebels to enjoy it. Honour will, in the end, be the portion of the former, and shame the inheritance of the latter.

4. *Show me thy ways, O* LORD; *teach me thy paths.* 5. *Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou* art *the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.*

We are travellers to heaven, who, through temptation, are often drawn aside, and lose our way. The way is the law of God; and, to keep that law, is to walk in the way. God only can put us in the way, and preserve and forward us therein; for which purpose, we must continue instant in prayer to "the "God of our salvation," that he would "teach" us to DO his will; that so we may not be ashamed and confounded.

6. *Remember, O* LORD, *thy tender mercies, and thy loving kindnesses; for they* have been *ever of old.*

The soul, when hard beset with sins and sorrows,

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is apt to think that God hath forsaken and forgotten her. In this case, she cannot more effectually prevail upon him, or comfort herself, than by recollecting, and, as it were, reminding him of former mercies; since, however the dispositions and affections of men may alter, God is always the same.

7. *Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O* LORD.

When God remembers his mercy, he forgets our sins; and when he forgets our sins, he remembers his mercy; for what else is his mercy, but the forgiveness, the blotting-out, the non-imputation of sin? Who that has lived long in the world, can survey the time past of his life, without breaking forth into this petition, adding, to "the sins of his youth," the many transgressions of his riper years?

8. *Good and upright is the* LORD: *therefore will he teach sinners in the way.*

Another argument for hope and trust in God, is drawn from his nature. He hates sin, and loves righteousness; he sent his Son to suffer for the one, and his Spirit to produce the other; and he cannot but be faithful and just to his own gracious promises, which all centre in the salvation of sinners by pardon and grace, through Him who is "the way, the truth, "and the life."

9. *The meek will he guide in judgement: and the meek will he teach his way.*

Pride and anger have no place in the school of Christ. The Master himself is "meek and lowly of "heart;" much more, surely, ought the scholars to

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be so. He who hath no sense of his ignorance, can have no desire or capability of knowledge, human or divine.

10. *All the paths of the* LORD *are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

The law of God is the way by which he cometh to us, as well as that by which we go to him; and all the different dispensations of that law, here styled the "paths of the Lord," are composed of "mercy and "truth;" mercy promising, and truth performing, meet together in Christ, who is, "the end of the law "to every one that believeth;" to such as "keep his "covenant and his testimonies."

11. *For thy name's sake,* O LORD, *pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.*

The pardon of sin is to be asked, and obtained, through that gracious "name," in which "mercy and "truth are met together; and so "great" is our sin, that pardon can be had only through that name.

12. *What man is he that feareth the* LORD? *Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.*

The blessings consequent upon "the fear of the "Lord" are such as will fully justify the earnestness and fervour of the foregoing petitions for pardon and grace. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning "of wisdom." He who hath it, will "choose" the right way, and will be "taught" to go therein.

13. *His soul shall dwell at ease,* Heb. *lodge in goodness: and his seed shall inherit the earth.*

It is a privilege of "the man who feareth the "Lord," that, not only in this present life, all things

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work together for his "good," but his soul, after having persevered in righteousness, shall take up its abode in the mansions of felicity. His "seed" likewise shall be blessed in the same manner, with such a portion of the temporal promise made to Abraham as God seeth best for them, and certainly with an abundant share in the spiritual inheritance, the NEW earth, wherein dwell righteousness, joy, and glory. "Blessed are the meek," the seed of Christ, "for "they shall inherit the earth." Matt. v. 5.

14. *The secret,* Heb. *fixed counsel,* or, *design, of the* LORD, is *with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant,* Heb. *and his covenant, to make them know it.*

The greatest happiness of man in this world is, to know the fixed and determinate counsels of God concerning the human race, and to understand the covenant of redemption. This likewise is the reward of "the fear of the Lord," which humbles the soul, and prepares it for divine illumination, causing it to place all its comfort in meditation on the wonders of heavenly love. "All things which I have heard of "my Father I have made known unto you," saith our Lord to his disciples: John xv. 15.

15. *Mine eyes* are *ever toward the* LORD; *for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.*

Encouraged to hope for the blessings above mentioned, the lowly suppliant still continues to fix the eyes of his understanding on their proper object, God his Saviour, beholding his glory, attending to his will, and expecting his mercy. An unfortunate dove, whose feet are taken in the snare of the fowler, is a

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fine emblem of the soul, entangled in the cares or pleasures of the world; from which she desires through the power of grace, to fly away, and to be at rest, with her glorified Redeemer.

16. *Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I* am *desolate and afflicted.*

They who are ever looking upon the Lord will be heard, when they beseech him to turn his face, and to look upon them. When the soul, forsaking and forsaken by all earthly supports and comforts, finds herself in a state of desolation, and is experimentally convinced of her being, not in a paradise of delights, but in a vale of misery, then her visitation and deliverance are at hand.

17. *The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.*

As life is prolonged, troubles are generally enlarged *, till at length they take up what room there is in the heart. The last scene of the tragedy is the most calamitous. So it was in the life of our dear Master. And every man will sooner or later perceive, that God alone can "bring him out of his "distresses."

18. *Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.*

Affliction and pain, whether of mind or body, are the fruits of sin; and the pardon of sin is the first

* Bishop Lowth, with some slight alterations of the text, thinks the rendering should be,

Coarctationes cordis mei dilata;
Et ex angustiis meis educ me.

See Meyrick's Annotations.

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step towards the removal of sorrow. The latter is sent to beget in us a due sense of the former, in order to a deliverance from both. In the new earth, "dwelleth righteousness;" and, for that reason, "there is no more sorrow, pain, nor crying." 2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 4.

19. *Consider mine enemies, for there are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.*

As the evils we suffer are great, so the enemies we have to encounter are many. Their name is "legion:" and to their envy, hatred, and malice, there are no bounds. How unequal the combat, unless thou, O God, goest forth with us by thy grace, "conquering and to conquer!"

20. *O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I have put my trust in thee.*

Preservation from sin, and deliverance from death, are two great gifts of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. For the latter clause, see ver. 2.

21. *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.*

How many wishes do our hearts send forth after riches, honours, and pleasures! how few after "integrity and uprightness!" yet these can "preserve" us, and those cannot. Absolute integrity and uprightness are the prerogatives of the King of righteousness: and it is his grace which makes us such as his mercy will accept. On him therefore let us "wait."

22. *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*

In the common salvation all have an interest; and for that reason, all should pray for it. The earthly

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David petitioned for Israel; the heavenly David ever continueth to intercede for the church; and every Christian ought to become a suppliant for his brethren, still looking and longing for that glorious day, when, by a joyful resurrection unto life eternal, God shall indeed "redeem Israel out of all his "troubles."

PSALM XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

The party speaking in this Psalm, whether we suppose it to be the typical, or the true David, the church, or any member thereof, lying under the false accusations of calumny, 1, 2, 3. appealeth to God in behalf of injured innocence; 4, 5. disclaimeth all connexion with wicked men; 6, 7, 8. declareth a fixed resolution to adhere to the worship of God in the church; 9, 10. prayeth to be delivered from the ungodly; 11. again protesteth integrity, and, 12. determineth to praise the Lord.

1. *Judge me, O* LORD, *for I have walked in mine integrity; I have trusted also in the* LORD; therefore *I shall not slide.*

We have here an appeal to God, in behalf of injured and calumniated innocence. This was the case of David, with regard to the accusations of Saul; of Christ, with regard to those of the Jews; and it is often the case of the church, and of good men in

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the world; for whose use this Psalm seems peculiarly calculated.

2. *Examine me, O* LORD, *and prove me; try my reins and my heart.*

A trial of this sort might be desired by David, and may be desired by men, like him, conscious of their integrity, as to the particular crimes charged upon them by the malice of their enemies. Christ alone could ask such a trial at large, as being equally free from every kind and degree of sin; and certain of receiving additional lustre from the increasing heat of the furnace.

3. *For thy loving kindness* is *before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.*

They who study, in order to copy, the "loving "kindness" and the "truth" of God, may have confidence towards him, whose "truth" will not suffer him to be false to the promises, which his "loving kindness" prompted him to make.

4. *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.* 5. *I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.*

David, driven by Saul into a land of aliens, yet preserved himself from the contagion of idolatry. And happy the Christian, who can say, that, during the time of his banishment and pilgrimage, he hath escaped the pollutions that are in the world, namely, vanity and hypocrisy, evil practices, and wicked principles. Christ alone, like his emblem the light, passed through all things undefiled.

6. *I will wash mine hands in my innocency: so will I compass thine altar,* O LORD: 7. *That I may*

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publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

Instead of consorting with the heathen, David comforts himself with the future prospect of restoration to Jerusalem: of attending the service of God in the tabernacle; of performing the legal ablutions, in token of innocency thereby signified; and of singing, before the holy altar, psalms of praise for his deliverance. The believing soul, in like manner, may find perpetual consolation, while she looks forward, toward her return home, from her exile in the world, to the Jerusalem above; her access to the fountain of life and purity; her employment of serving God in the eternal temple; and chanting forth, with angels and archangels, the new songs of the celestial Sion, for so great salvation.

8. LORD, *I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth,* Heb. *the place of the tabernacle of thy glory.*

With what ardent affection the banished Prophet sighs for the beauty of holiness in the church! the most amiable object on earth, because the nearest resemblance of heaven, where is the true "habitation "of God's house, and the place of the tabernacle of "his glory;" since of the heavenly Jerusalem St. John tells us, that the "Lord God Almighty and "the Lamb are the temple." Rev. xxi. 22.

9. *Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:* 10. *In whose hands* is *mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.*

In consideration of his integrity and piety, David

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beseeches God not to deliver him over into the hands of his unjust and bloody enemies, nor to reckon him in their number. Let our lot, O Lord, be among thy children here, that it may be among them hereafter.

11. *But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.*

The Christian's resolution, like that of the Prophet, must be, to hold fast his "integrity" in the midst of his enemies, and not follow a multitude to do evil; as knowing, that the day of final "redemption and mercy" will come.

12. *My foot standeth in an even place; in the congregations will I bless the* LORD.

The law of God is that "even place," that plain and direct path, in which the affections, which are the "feet" of the soul, must be immovably fixed, so that nothing may induce her to swerve from the stability of her purpose, to the right hand, or to the left. David, upon his return to his country, "blessed "the Lord in the congregation" of Israel, by singing psalms of praise and thanksgiving; and by the constant use of those very psalms, the Lord is daily "blessed" in all Christian "congregations" throughout the world; yea, and he shall be so blessed to the end of time.

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FIFTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm containeth, 1—3. a declaration of trust and confidence in Jehovah, amidst the dangers and tumults of war; 4. a longing desire of restoration to the city and house of God; 5, 6. a triumphant assurance of final victory and exultation; 7—12. earnest prayer for support and protection; 13. a profession of faith, and its mighty power and comfort in affliction; 14. an exhortation to patience.

1. *The* LORD *is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The* LORD *is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*

God is our "light," as he showeth us the state we are in, and the enemies we have to encounter; he is our "strength," as he enableth us, by his grace, to cope with, and overcome them; and he is our "salvation," as the author and finisher of our deliverance from sin, death, and Satan. All this he was to the blessed person whom David represented; and all this he will be to his faithful servants. "If God" therefore "be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31.

2. *When the wicked,* even *mine enemies and my foes came upon me, to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

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The past time is often used, in the prophetical language, to intimate the certainty of the future. Faith sees the foe already vanquished, and the prey snatched from the jaws of the devouring lion.

3. *Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this* will *I* be *confident.*

What avails it, that the "host" of darkness is in arms, and the world taking the field against us, when the LORD is our light, and heaven our ally?

4. *One* thing *have I desired of the* LORD, *that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the* LORD *all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the* LORD, *and to inquire in his temple.*

The victories of David ended in his restoration to Jerusalem, and the service of God: the victories of Christ terminated in his triumphant return to a better Jerusalem; and this ought to be the "one thing de-"sired" by the Christian, that, after his conquest over the body of sin, he may pass the unnumbered days of eternity in the courts of heaven, contemplating the beauty and glory of his Redeemer.

5. *For in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*

The protection and consolation experienced by believers of the church militant, give them a taste of the loving kindness of the Lord, and make them impatiently desirous of quenching their thirst at the fountain of divine pleasures, after they shall have been exalted upon the ROCK of ages, from whence that fountain flows.

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6. *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the* LORD.

These words, as they are supposed to be spoken by David, by Christ, or by the church, express their respective assurances, through faith, of final victory over their several enemies, with their determined resolution of singing hallelujahs to Jehovah, for the same.

7. *Hear, O* LORD, when *I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.*

From the assurances of faith it is always good to descend to the humiliation of prayer to God, who alone can grant unto us that one thing which we desire, and long after, while in the land of our captivity, and house of our pilgrimage. See ver. 4.

8. When thou saidst, *Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face,* LORD, *will I seek.*

The voice of God, throughout the Scriptures, exhorteth the believer to turn away from the delusive appearances of the creature, and to seek after Him who is "altogether lovely," until he behold "the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." To this voice the believer answers, like a well tuned instrument to the master's touch, declaring his resolution so to do.

9. *Hide not thy face* far *from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation!*

The suppliant, having determined to seek the face of God, here prayeth, that he would permit himself

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to be found, and to be seen; and that he would not, by "hiding his face," cause the light of knowledge to become darkness, and the fire of charity to go out. The church dreadeth nothing so much as an eclipse of the "Sun of righteousness."

10. *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the* LORD *will take me up.*

A time will come, when the dearest earthly friends and relations can no longer be of any assistance to us*. The case of the church and of the soul is oftentimes compared to that of a poor, helpless, exposed orphan. Where worldly comforts end, heavenly ones begin. See Isa. xlix. 15.; Matt. xxiii. 37. John ix. 35.

11. *Teach me thy way, O* LORD, *and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.*

The child of God, learning to walk in the law of his heavenly Father, prayeth to be directed and strengthened from above, that the enemy may neither pervert his steps, nor triumph in his fall.

12. *Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*

David had his enemies, and false accusers; Christ also had his: and every child of God hath need to petition for deliverance from the great enemy of his salvation, the grand accuser of the brethren, who is

* As there seems to be some difficulty in supposing the Psalmist's parents to have "deserted" him, they might perhaps be said to have "forsaken" him (as Muis conjectures), that is, to have left him behind them, as being dead. MERRICK.

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ever breathing out malice and cruelty against the body and members of Christ.

13. I had fainted, *unless I had believed to see the goodness of the* LORD *in the land of the living.*

"Faith" in the comfortable promises of God is the only sovereign cordial for a "fainting spirit. Earth is the land of the dying; we must extend our prospect into heaven, which is the land of the "liv-"ing," where the faithful shall "see," and experience evermore "the goodness of the LORD."

14. *Wait on the* LORD: *be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the* LORD.

The person speaking concludes with an apostrophe to his own soul, resulting from the confidence in God, expressed ver. 1. from the desire and the hope of heaven, 4—13. and from the manifold pledges of the divine love already received in this life, 14.: the proper inference from all which considerations is this; that we should patiently "wait on the Lord," till the few and evil days of our pilgrimage pass away, and we arrive at the mansions prepared for us, in the house of our heavenly Father; till our warfare be accomplished, and terminate in the peace of God; till the storms and tempests of wintry time shall give place to the unclouded calm, and the ever-blooming pleasures, of eternal spring.

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PSALM XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm, like the xxiid and many others, consisteth of two parts. For, 1—5. the true David appeareth in his state of humiliation and suffering; he prayeth for deliverance, and prophesieth the destruction of his enemies. 6—9. He singeth a sweet, though short, hymn of triumph, and intercedeth for his church and people.

1. *Unto thee will I cry, O* LORD, *my rock; be not silent to me: lest,* if *thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.*

The true David here maketh supplication, "with "strong crying," to the Father, that he may not be suffered to continue, like other men, under the dominion of the "grave." The Christian prayeth, in the same words, to be delivered from the "pit" of corruption; and mightily should he "cry" to Jehovah, the "rock" of his salvation, until his prayer be heard and answered.

2. *Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.*

Christ frequently interceded for his people, with his "hands lifted up" toward "heaven," in fervent prayer: and—"I will," saith the apostle, "that "men pray every where, lifting up holy hands:"

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1 Tim. ii. 8. Shall our Redeemer pray for us, and shall we not pray for ourselves?

3. *Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.*

Christ, who alone is without sin, petitioneth that he may not be oppressed by sinners; he who is truth and love, prayeth to be preserved from the "false "and malicious." Let us pray to be made like him; and, like him, to be delivered from evil, especially from the evil of a "lying and slandering" tongue.

4. *Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours; give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.* 5. *Because they regard not the works of the* LORD, *nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*

In these verses, as indeed in most of the imprecatory passages, the imperative and the future are used promiscuously; "Give them—render them—he shall "destroy them." If, therefore, the verbs, in all such passages, were uniformly rendered in the future, every objection against the Scripture imprecations would vanish at once, and they would appear clearly to be what they are, namely, prophecies of the divine judgements, which have been since executed against the Jews, and which will be executed against all the enemies of Jehovah and his Christ, whom neither the "works" of creation, nor those of redemption, can lead to repentance.

6. *Blessed* be *the* LORD, *because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.* 7. *The* LORD is *my*

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strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: and therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

The scene now changes from the humiliation and sufferings, to the glory and triumph of Christ, our Head, who, through the power of the Divinity, having overcome his enemies, may be supposed, at his resurrection from the dead, to have sung this strain; a strain which they who have been delivered from sin and sorrow, will best understand by using it.

8. *The* LORD *is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his Anointed,* or, *Christ.*

He who saved and exalted the Head, will also save and exalt the members; or, as St. Paul expresseth it, "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the "dead dwell in you: he that raised up Christ from "the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies "by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you:" Rom. viii. 11. And for the accomplishment of this glorious salvation, the salvation of his church, the Redeemer intercedeth in the remaining verse of this Psalm.

9. *Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.*

Save us, O Lord Jesu, from our sins; bless us, O thou Son of Abraham, with the blessing of righteousness; feed us, O thou good Shepherd of the sheep; and lift us up for ever from the dust, O thou, who art the resurrection, and the life!

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PSALM XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, the Prophet, 1, 2. calleth the kings of the earth to give glory to Jehovah, and to the VOICE, or WORD, of his power; the effects of which, in the world and in the church, are most magnificently described; the same things being true of thunder and lightning in the former, and of the Word of God in the latter; as each of them is styled the "Voice of the Lord;" and both, 3, 4. are mighty in operation; both, 5. rend, and, 6, 7. shake, and, 8. pierce, and melt, and 9. make manifest. The Psalm concludes with, 10. an acknowledgement of the extent and glory of God's kingdom, and, 11. a promise of victory and peace through him.

1. *Give unto the* LORD, *O ye mighty, give unto the* LORD *glory and strength.* 2. *Give unto the* LORD *the glory due unto his name; worship the* LORD *in the beauty of holiness.*

The Prophet addresseth himself to the "mighty" ones of the earth, exhorting them to "give" God the "glory," and to submit themselves to the kingdom of Messiah, to honour that holy "name," by which they must be saved; to bow before his altars, "by whom kings reign;" and to cast down their crowns at the foot of the eternal throne.

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3. *The voice of the* LORD is *upon the waters; the* GOD *of glory thundereth; the* LORD is *upon many waters.*

The reason why the mighty are exhorted to serve Jehovah is, because of his wondrous works in the world, and in the church. By the "voice," or, "word," of God, the "waters" were driven down into the deep, and forbidden to overflow the earth any more; by the voice of God, the tumultuous and raging nations subsided, and the church was immovably fixed upon the rock of her salvation; and by the Gospel of the "God of Glory," all those effects were produced in the hearts of men, which are wrought upon terrestrial substances, by its well known and most significant emblem in the material heavens.

4. *The voice of the* LORD is *powerful; the voice of the* LORD is *full of majesty.*

Of the power and majesty of God's voice, when he speaketh from heaven in thunder, few hearts are insensible; of the power and majesty of his voice, when he spoke from heaven by his apostles, those "sons of" the spiritual "thunder," the world was once fully sensible. O may the evangelical "Boaner-"ges" so cause the glorious sound of the Gospel to be heard, under the whole heaven, that the world may again be made sensible thereof; before that voice of the Son of Man, which hath so often called sinners to repentance, shall call them to judgement!

5. *The voice of the* LORD *breaketh the cedars; yea, the* LORD *breaketh the cedars of Libanus.*

The force of lightning is known to rend in pieces the tallest and strongest trees in a moment; nor is

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the word of God less effectual in bringing down the loftiest pride and rending the hardest heart of man, by the Spirit which accompanieth it. Thus was the persecuting Saul humbled and converted, by a "light" and a "voice" from "heaven;" so that, instead of "breathing out threatenings and slaughters," he asks, like a meek and dutiful child, "Lord, "what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 1, 6.

6. *He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.*

Thunder not only demolisheth the cedars, but "shaketh the mountains" on which they grow. Thus by the Gospel, "every mountain and hill was "shaken, and made low; every high thing, which "exalted itself against the knowledge of Christ, was "cast down, and brought into subjection:" Isa. xl. 4.; 2 Cor. x. 5.

7. *The voice of the* LORD *divideth the flames of fire.*

By the power of God, the "flames of fire" are "divided" and sent abroad from the clouds upon the earth, in the terrible form of lightning, that sharp and glittering sword of the Almighty, which no substance can withstand. The same power of God goeth forth by his word, "quick and powerful, and sharper "than any two-edged sword," penetrating, melting, enlightening, and inflaming the hearts of men; Acts ii. 3.; Heb. iv. 12.

8. *The voice of the* LORD *shaketh the wilderness; the* LORD *shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.*

The wilderness of Kadesh was a part of that wilderness through which the Israelites passed, in their

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way to Canaan; see Numb. xiii. 26. Thunder shaketh those wide-extended deserts, as well as Lebanon and Sirion, mountains of Judea. The Gospel was first preached in Palestine, but from thence it went forth into the Gentile world, that dry, barren, and desolate "wilderness." The wilderness is yet once again to be shaken by "the voice of God," and to be removed for ever, that paradise may succeed in its place.

9. *The voice of the* LORD *maketh the hinds to calve,* or, *the oaks to tremble* *, *and discovereth the forests; and in his temple doth every one speak of* his *glory.*

Storms of thunder and lightning, attended often with whirlwinds, strip the trees of their leaves and bark, and disclose the recesses of forests. It is by the "word of God," that the hidden "things of "darkness are manifested," and the "counsels of all "hearts revealed:" for "all things are naked and "opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have "to do:" 1 Cor. iv. 5. Heb. iv. 13. For these his marvellous works, in the natural and spiritual world, God is daily "glorified" in the "church."

10. *The* LORD *sitteth upon the flood: yea, the* LORD *sitteth a King for ever.*

* So bishop Lowth renders the clause in his Lectures. Aristotle, Plutarch, and Pliny, as cited by Mr. Merrick, mention the case of abortion being sometimes caused among cattle by thunder. Whatever terrifies to any degree, may certainly produce such an effect. But the bishop's interpretation is, in every respect, the most eligible. The evident connexion with the words that follow—"discovereth the forests,"—forbids us to doubt of its being right.

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The Lord Jesus sitteth on his throne, having all power in the dispensations of nature and of grace; by which, as he checketh at pleasure the rage of the most boisterous elements in the former, so, with the same ease, he controlleth the fury of the enemy and oppressor in the latter; saying, with equal authority in both cases, PEACE! BE STILL!

11. *The* LORD *will give strength to his people; the* LORD *will bless his people with peace.*

From Jehovah, whose power and majesty have been with so much sublimity displayed in this whole Psalm, we are to expect, through faith and prayer, "strength" to overcome our enemies, whether ghostly or bodily; and also the blessing of "peace," which must be the fruit of victory. Thou, O Christ, art the "Mighty God;" and therefore, thou art the "Prince of Peace." Isa. ix. 6.

SIXTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXX.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, or devout hymn, composed probably by David, on his revisiting the sanctuary, after a joyful recovery from some dangerous sickness, he, 1—3. returneth thanks for that event; and, 4. calleth the church to do so likewise, 5. drawing a comparison between temporary sufferings and eternal rewards. 6, 7. He describeth his former

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prosperity succeeded by affliction, with, 8—10. the supplications poured forth to the Almighty, in the day of his distress; and then returneth again, 11. to celebrate his deliverance, and, 12. to glorify God for the same. The Psalm is finely adapted to the case of the true David, and of Christians, his disciples and followers.

1. *I will extol thee, O* LORD; *for thou hast lifted me up,* Heb. *drawn me out, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.*

These words, if originally composed and uttered by king David, on occasion of some temporal mercy, apply, in a far more emphatical and beautiful manner, to the case of Messiah, suffering and rising again, as well as to that of his church and people, following him, both in his sufferings and resurrection; when we shall all lift up our voices, and sing together—"I will magnify thee, O Lord, for thou "hast lifted me up! and hast not made my foes to "rejoice over me!"

2. *O* LORD *my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.*

Deliverance is to be attained by "prayer;" for so David, and so the Son of David, obtained it; the former was "healed" at his restoration to health and strength; the latter at the resurrection: the soul is healed at its repentance and conversion; and the body will hereafter be repaired, beautified, and glorified, from the ruins of the grave.

3. *O* LORD, *thou hast brought up my soul,* or,

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animal frame, from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

The resurrection of David was a figurative one; that of Christ was a real one, as that of his saints will be; so that the Psalm is more strictly applicable to the true, than it ever could have been to the typical David. The latter clause may be rendered—"Thou hast quickened me from among them that "go down to the pit;" which rendering is most agreeable to the former part of the verse—"Thou "hast brought up my frame from the grave."

4. *Sing unto the* LORD, *O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness,* or, *of his Holy One.*

The church of the redeemed is called upon to glorify the name of God, for his remembrance of "the King of Saints," and for the accomplishment of the promise in raising him from the dead.

5. *For his anger* endureth but *a moment; in his favour* is *life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy* cometh *in the morning.*

This is a most beautiful and affecting image of the sufferings and exaltation of Christ; of the sorrows and joys of a penitent; of the miseries of time, and the glories of eternity; of the night of death, and the morning of the resurrection.

6. *And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.* 7. LORD, *by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face,* and *I was troubled.*

David, after his success against Goliath, and Christ, upon his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, were

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hailed by the acclamations and hosannas of the people, as the Christian may sometimes meet with the applauses of the world, and be led to think himself established in prosperity. But other troubles awaited David; and the blessed Jesus was nailed to the cross. Let not the disciple expect to be above his master; nor, in the season of life and joy, neglect to prepare for the approaching days of sorrow and darkness.

8. *I cried unto thee, O* LORD; *and unto the* LORD *I made supplication.* 9. *What profit* is there *in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?* 10. *Hear, O* LORD, *and have mercy upon me:* LORD, *be thou my helper.*

These are some of "the strong cryings and supplications," which the true David poured forth, while under the cloud of his passion; and which are to be poured forth by us, when conformed to his image, in suffering affliction. The argument here used, is a very powerful one, namely, the necessity of a resurrection from the grave, that man may be saved, and God glorified. The dead cannot praise, or serve God. They must live again for this purpose; and for this purpose it is, that we should desire to live, whether it be in the present world, or that which is to come.

11. *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.*

This might be true of David, delivered from his calamity; it was true of Christ, arising from the

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tomb, to die no more; it is true of the penitent, exchanging his sackcloth for the garments of salvation; and it will be verified in us all, at the last day, when we shall put off the dishonours of the grave, to shine in glory everlasting.

12. *To the end that* my *glory may sing praise to thee; and not be silent: O* LORD *my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*

The end of Christ's resurrection, of the salvation of the souls of the faithful, and the resurrection of their bodies, is one and the same, namely, the glory of God, who is the author of every kind of deliverance; whose praise should, therefore, be resounded by the grateful tongues of the redeemed, from generation to generation; as the tongue then becometh the "glory" of man; when it is employed in setting forth the glory of God.

PSALM XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, ver. 5th of which was pronounced by our Lord, when expiring on the cross, we hear the true David, like his representative of old, 1—6. supplicating for deliverance; 7, 8. rejoicing in the divine favour and assistance; 9—13. describing his afflicted and forlorn state; 14—18. returning again to his prayers; 19—22. celebrating the mercies of God to the children of Adam; and, 23,

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24, exhorting his saints to courage and perseverance, under their troubles in the world.

1. *In thee, O* LORD, *do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.*

God is faithful and just, to save those who, in time of trouble, renouncing all dependence on themselves and the creature, "put their trust" only in his mercy. His honour is engaged by his promise, not to let such be "ashamed" of their confidence.

2. *Bow down thine ear to me, deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.*

The Christian, like his blessed Master, is "besieged" by many and powerful enemies, insomuch that, notwithstanding all human precautions, "unless Jehovah keep the city, the watchman waketh "in vain." Who, in such circumstances, would not pray for "speedy" deliverance?

3. *For thou* art *my rock and my fortress: therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me.*

God will be the "rock" and "fortress" of those who esteem him as such; and, after having been so, through all the dangers and difficulties of life, he will "lead" and "guide" them to the realms of peace and rest, for the sake of that "name" which implieth salvation.

4. *Pull me out of that net which they have laid privily for me: for thou* art *my strength.*

As David prayed for an escape from the secret conspiracies that were entered into against him, so did Christ pray for deliverance from the snares of

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death; and so doth the Christian pray to be extricated from the toils both of sin and death.

5. *Into thine hand I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O* LORD, *thou God of truth.*

David, in his distresses, might, by these words, express his resignation of himself and his affairs into the hands of God; but it is certain, that Christ actually did expire upon the cross, with the former part of this verse in his mouth: Luke xxiii. 46. Nor is there any impropriety in the application of the latter part to him; since, as man, the surety and representative of our nature, he was "redeemed" from the power of the enemy, by "the God of truth" accomplishing his promises.

6. *I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the* LORD.

They may hope for redemption, who so "trust in "God," as to trust in nothing beside him; for all else is "vanity," and will deceive.

7. *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy; for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversities:* 8. *And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; thou hast set my feet in a large room.*

The considerations that make the soul "cheerful" in the hour of affliction, are, that God is merciful; that as he is not ignorant, so neither is he unmindful, of our troubles; that he is a friend, who "knows" us in adversity, no less than in prosperity; that he hath not subjected us to the necessity of being overcome by our spiritual enemies; but hath, "with the "temptation, made a way for us to escape."

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9. *Have mercy upon me, O* LORD, *for I am in trouble; mine eye is consumed with grief,* yea, *my soul,* or, *animal frame, and my belly.*

Upon the strength of the foregoing considerations, supplication is here made for deliverance from troubles, which wasted the eyes with weeping, and exhausted the strength and vigour of the frame. Such were the troubles of David, and, more emphatically, those of Christ; and sickness and sorrow will one day teach us all to use the same expressions.

10. *For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.*

Do we not, in these words, hear the voice of the "man of sorrows," suffering not indeed for his own "iniquity," but for ours, of which he frequently, in the Psalms, speaks as if it were his own? If sin was punished in the innocent Lamb of God, let us not expect that it should be unpunished in us, unless we repent: and let our punishment never fail to remind us of our guilt.

11. *I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without, fled from me.*

These particulars were never more applicable to David, than they were to the Son of David, when his acquaintance, at beholding him reviled by his enemies, were terrified from attending him, and when "all the disciples forsook him, and fled." The same things are often too true of the faith and the church. They are true likewise of every man, when he suffers

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the dishonours of the last enemy, death; when he is "a fear" to his dearest friends, and they are obliged to forsake him.

12. *I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind; I am like a broken vessel.*

This was literally the case of Christ, when laid in the sepulchre, and esteemed no longer the object of hope by his friends, or of fear by his enemies. That he should be so "forgotten," while dead, is less wonderful, than that this should have happened since his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven.

13. *For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side, while they took counsel together against me; they devised to take away my life.*

The slander of Shimei, and the counsel of Ahithophel against king David, direct us to the slanders of the Jews, and the counsels of Judas and the sanhedrim against the beloved Son of God, who, in his church, will be persecuted in like manner, by the ungodly, to the world's end.

14. *But I trusted in thee, O* LORD: *I said, Thou* art *my God.* 15. *My times* are *in thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.* 16. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.*

In all our afflictions, after the example of the typical, and of the true David, we are to have recourse to the prayer of faith; we are to consider, that Jehovah is our God and Saviour: that the times and the seasons of prosperity and adversity, of life and death, are in his hand; and therefore on him we are

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to wait, till the day of mercy shall dawn, and the shadows fly away.

17. *Let me not be ashamed, O* LORD, *for I have called upon thee; let the wicked be ashamed,* and *let them be silent in the grave.* 18. *Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.*

Ahithophel, for his treason against David, and Judas for his treachery against Christ, felt the force of this prophetical imprecation, or prediction, which will also, one day, take its full effect, in the confusion of all impenitent calumniators and traitors.

19. O *how great* is *thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee*; which *thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!*

Peace of conscience, the comforts of the Spirit, and the hope of future glory, will teach the soul, even in the darkest night of affliction, to break forth into this exulting strain of gratitude and praise, for the blessings experienced by those who confess their Saviour before men.

20. *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride,* Heb. *conspiracies, of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*

In times of contention and persecution, there is a refuge for the faithful in "the tabernacle of David," which is the mystical body of Christ, inhabited by the presence of God. In this sacred "pavilion," they enjoy the pleasures of contemplation and devo-

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tion, regardless of the distant tumult and confusion of the world.

21. *Blessed* be *the* LORD; *for he hath showed me marvellous kindness in a strong city.*

The man Christ, and the church with him, like David of old, here rejoice in the protection and saving power of God, in the same manner as in Isa. xxvi. 1. "We have a strong city; salvation "will God appoint for walls and bulwarks."

22. *For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my supplications, when I cried unto thee.*

Whoever shall consider the troubles of the beloved Son of God, bereaved for a season of the light of heaven, only that it might afterwards arise upon him with the greater lustre, will be taught never to faint under the chastisement of the Lord; since the darkness of the night argues the approaching dawn of the day.

23. *O love the* LORD, *all ye his saints;* for *the* LORD *preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.* 24. *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the* LORD.

The exhortation is raised from the consideration of the deliverance of Christ, with the destruction of his enemies; which ought to strengthen and comfort the hearts of believers, under all their afflictions here below; that so, after having suffered courageously with their Master, they may triumphantly enter into his joy and glory.

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SIXTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, which is the second of those styled penitential, David, as a model of true repentance, 1, 2. extolleth the blessedness of those whose sins are forgiven them; 3, 4. describeth the torment endured by him, before he confessed his sin; and, 5. the goodness of God in pardoning it, when confessed; 6. he foretelleth that others, after his example, should obtain the like mercy; 7. declareth his hope and confidence in his God; who, 8. is introduced, promising wisdom and grace to the penitent; 9, 10. sinners are warned against obstinacy; and, 11. the righteous exhorted to rejoice in God their Saviour.

1. *Blessed* is he whose *transgression* is *forgiven*, whose *sin* is *covered*. 2. *Blessed* is *the man unto whom the* LORD *imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit* there is *no guile*.

As the sick man is eloquent in the praise of health, so the sinner beginneth this his confession of sin with an encomium on righteousness, longing earnestly to be made a partaker of the evangelical "blessedness;" to be delivered from the guilt and the power of sin; to be pardoned and sanctified through faith which is in Christ Jesus. See Rom. iv. 6.

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3. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.*

In opposition to the blessedness above mentioned, the penitent now proceeds to declare his own wretched state, occasioned by his "keeping silence," of not confessing his sin, which therefore rankled and festered inwardly, occasioning torment inexpressible. The disorders of the mind, as well as those of the body, should be communicated to persons skilful in assuaging and removing them. Many might thereby be saved from the horrible crime of self-murder, which is generally committed in agonies of solitary remorse and despair.

4. *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*

Outward calamities, and inward pangs of conscience, are the strokes of God's hand, designed to humble the sinner, and lead him to confession; and in the infliction of these, such severity is sometimes necessary, that the patient is brought to death's door, before a turn can be given to the disease; but the pain of a blow upon an ulcerated part, however exquisite, is well compensated for, if, by promoting a discharge, it effect a cure.

5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the* LORD; *and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.*

What is this, but the Gospel itself—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins:" 1 John i. 9. And thus it happened, in one

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case, to David, who had no sooner confessed his sin to the prophet Nathan, but an answer of peace was instantly vouchsafed—"The LORD hath put away "thy sin:" 2 Sam. xii. 13. Were angels to descend from heaven, to comfort the dejected spirit of a sinner, they could say nothing more effectual for the purpose, than what is said in this verse of our Psalm. But practice will be the best comment upon it.

6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*

Encouraged, by this example and declaration of David, to hope for mercy, on confession of sin, it is here foretold, that humble penitents shall be led to make their prayer unto God in the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation, while "he may be "found;" that so they may be forgiven, and preserved from great and overwhelming calamities; from the fears of death, and the terrors of judgement.

7. *Thou* art *my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble: thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.*

The penitent, happily returned to the house of his heavenly Father, now esteemeth himself safe under his protection; and resteth in full assurance that all his sorrows shall one day be turned into joy, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

8. *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*

The Redeemer is here introduced, returning an

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answer to the penitent's declarations of his humility and faith; promising "instruction" in that wisdom which every man wants who continues in sin, together with the direction of the Spirit in the way of righteousness, and the superintendence of his watchful care. Man cannot prevent evils, because he cannot foresee them. "Next therefore to the protecting "power of God's Wing, is the securing prospect of "his Eye," saith Dr. South.

9. *Be ye not as the horse,* or *as the mule,* which *have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.*

The person speaking in the former verse, or the Prophet himself, exhorts sinners to repent, at the invitation and encouragement afforded them; and not to continue, like brutes, fierce, obstinate, and senseless, until, like them, they must be tamed and managed by force, and the severity of discipline.

10. *Many sorrows* shall be *to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the* LORD, *mercy shall compass him about.*

They who are not to be reformed by gentler methods, must learn righteousness under the rod of affliction, in the school of the cross: and happy are they, if their "sorrows" may so turn to their advantage. But happier are those who, led by the goodness of God to repentance and faith, enjoy the light and protection of "mercy."

11. *Be glad in the* LORD, *and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all* ye that are *upright in heart* *.

* Bishop Lowth is of opinion, this verse should be the first of

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In the beginning of the Psalm, the penitent, smitten with a sense of his wretchedness, on account of his sins, extolleth the blessedness of the righteous; he now again doth the same, through a joyful sense of his pardon, and restoration to that happy state. Let us "rejoice," O Lord Jesu; but let us rejoice "in thee," and in thy salvation; so shall we rejoice indeed!

PSALM XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, the Prophet, 1—3. exhorteth the faithful to a spiritual and holy joy in their God, whom they are to praise, 4, 5. for his truth, righteousness, and mercy; 6—9. for his power, displayed in the works of creation; 10—19. for the wisdom of his providence, and the care he hath of his people. 20, 21. The righteous, in answer to the exhortation, declare their joy and confidence in God their Saviour, and, 22. prefer a petition for his manifestation.

1. *Rejoice in the* LORD, *O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright.*

the ensuing Psalm, the repetition being in the very style and manner of the Hebrews, and the words repeated and varied with the greatest art and elegance. "Be glad in the Lord, and re-"joice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright "in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is "comely for the upright." See Merrick's Annotations.

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God, and not the world, is the fountain of "joy;" which sinners talk of, but the righteous only possess. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, "rejoice:" Philip. iv. 4.

2. *Praise the* LORD *with harp; sing unto him with psaltery*, and *an instrument of ten strings.*

Music, both vocal and instrumental, is of eminent use in setting forth the praises of God; but there is no instrument like the rational soul, and no melody like that of well-tuned affections. When this music accompanies the other, the sacred harmony of the church is complete.

3. *Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.*

"Old things are passed away," and the ideas of a Christian are to be transferred from the old world, and the old dispensation, to the "new;" since, under the Gospel, "all things are become new," and all men ought to become so: Rev. xxi. 1. 5. Abilities of every kind are never so well employed, as in the service of him who giveth them.

4. *For the word of the* LORD *is right: and all his works* are done *in truth.*

God is to be praised for his word, and his works; for his rectitude in the one, and his truth in the other; for his faithfulness in accomplishing by the latter, what his goodness had promised in the former. The sense will be the same, if we suppose that by the "word of the Lord" is meant the personal WORD, or Son of God, all whose "works" wrought for the salvation of men, are done in truth, as witnessed by the law and the prophets.

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5. *He loveth righteousness and judgement: the earth is full of the goodness,* Heb. *mercy, of the* LORD.

"Justice" is an attribute inseparable from God; and what deserves the praises of man, as it excites the admiration of angels, is, that without sacrificing this formidable attribute, he hath contrived to fill and overflow the earth with his "mercy."

6. *By the word of the* LORD *were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath,* or, *spirit, of his mouth.*

It is true, that the world was created by the "word," or *fiat* of God, which may be here described, after the manner of men, as formed by "the breath of his mouth." It is also true, that by the instrumentality of the eternal WORD, and the eternal SPIRIT, the old heavens and earth were made; as also the new heavens and earth which shall succeed them. Glory is due from man to God, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.

7. *He gathereth the waters of the sea together, as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.*

The next instance of divine power and goodness, for which we are here excited to be thankful, is that of laying up the waters, which originally covered the face of the earth, in the great depth beneath. And let us reflect, that, by the same divine power and goodness, a deluge of wickedness and violence is prevented from overwhelming the faith and the church.

8. *Let all the earth fear the* LORD: *let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him:* 9. *For*

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he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

He who made all things, who preserves all things, and can in a moment destroy all things, is the proper object of our "fear;" and that we fear him so little, is a most convincing proof of the corruption and blindness of our hearts.

10. *The* LORD *bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.* 11. *The counsel of the* LORD *standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.*

The wisdom of God's providence is not less worthy of adoration than the power of his might. By this wisdom the "counsels" of states and empires are either directed to the accomplishment of the great counsel of heaven; or, if they attempt to thwart it, are blasted, and "brought to nothing." History will force all, who read it with this view, to acknowledge thus much. And with this view, indeed, it should always be read.

12. *Blessed* is *the nation whose God* is *the* LORD; and *the people* whom *he hath chosen for his own inheritance.*

The foregoing considerations of the righteousness, truth, mercy, power, and wisdom, of Jehovah, naturally suggest a reflection on the "blessedness" of the church, in whose cause all those attributes are, by the covenant of grace, engaged and exercised. But who now esteems this blessedness as it deserves?

13. *The* LORD *looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the sons of men.* 14. *From the place of his habitation, he looketh upon all the inhabitants of*

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the earth. 15. *He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.*

How great must be the advantage of living in his favour, and under his protection, who, from the watch-tower of his eternal throne, beholdeth, directeth, and controlleth at pleasure, not only the actions and the words, but the very thoughts and imaginations of all the inhabitants of the earth! For, this being the case, it is most certain, that,

16. *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.* 17. *An horse* is *a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver* any *by his great strength.*

All the power in the world is less than nothing, if brought into the field against that of God; so that the fate of every battle will depend upon the side which he shall please to take, who is equally able to confound the many and the mighty, and to give victory to the weak and the few. The same is true of that spiritual warfare in which we are all engaged.

18. *Behold, the eye of the* LORD is *upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mercy:* 19. *To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.*

The ever-waking eye of Providence, which looketh on all, looketh with favour and loving-kindness on such as "fear" God without despondency, and "hope" in him without presumption; their bodies are often wonderfully preserved in times of danger and want; but, what is of far greater consequence, their souls are saved from spiritual and everlasting

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death, and nourished, in the wilderness, with the bread of heaven.

20. *Our soul waiteth for the* LORD; *he* is *our help and our shield.* 21. *For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.*

In answer to the foregoing exhortation, the "righteous" are here introduced, declaring their fixed resolution to persevere in faith and patience, "waiting" for the coming of their Lord and Saviour, in whom they "rejoice with joy unspeakable and "full of glory," by reason of that humble and holy confidence which they have in him.

22. *Let thy mercy, O* LORD, *be upon us, according as we hope in thee.*

The "hope" of the church was always in Messiah. Of old she prayed for the "mercy" of his first advent; now she expecteth his second. Grant us, O Lord, hope, of which we may never be disappointed.

PSALM XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

The Prophet, escaped out of the hands of his enemies, uttereth a song of praise, in words which the Christian now employeth to celebrate the far greater deliverance of his Saviour, and himself by him, from the power of more formidable adversaries. 1—7. He calleth his brethren to rejoice with him, and to magnify God for the favour and

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protection vouchsafed to his servant, in a time of danger; 8—10. he exhorteth others to taste and experience the goodness of Jehovah to such as fear him; and for that purpose, 11—14. instructeth them in the nature and effects of divine fear; after which, 15—22. he sweetly descanteth on the certainty of redemption from all the tribulations endured by the faithful in this mortal life.

1. *I will bless the* LORD *at all times; his praise* shall *continually* be *in my mouth.*

The Christian, delivered from many perils, yet continually liable to more, finds cause, at all seasons and in all situations, to bless God. "In all things "he gives thanks, and rejoices even in tribulation," which cannot deprive him of the true ground of all joy, for the salvation of Christ.

2. *My soul shall make her boast in the* LORD: *the humble shall hear* thereof, *and be glad.*

The glory of every action is to be ascribed to God, whose interpositions, in behalf of his people of old time, afford consolation and joy to the humble and afflicted. But chiefly are the members of the church bound to give thanks for the resurrection and triumph of Christ, their head. "The humble" can never "hear" of this, without being "glad."

3. *O magnify the* LORD *with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

The Christian, not only himself magnifies God, but exhorts others to do likewise; and longs for that day to come, when all nations and languages, laying

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aside their contentions and animosities, their prejudices and their errors, their unbelief, their heresies, and their schisms, shall make their sound to be heard as one, in magnifying and exalting their great Redeemer's name.

4. *I sought the* LORD, *and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.*

The ground of this rejoicing, to the typical David, might be his deliverance from his enemies; to the true David, it was his rescue from the powers of darkness; to the believing soul, it is her salvation from sin; and to the body, it will be redemption from the grave. Then the Lord will deliver us "from "all our fears;" and this he will do, if we "seek" him, in his scriptures, and his ordinances.

5. *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.*

Faith is the eye, sin the blindness, and Christ the light of the soul. The blindness must be removed, and the eye must be directed to the light, which will then illuminate the whole man, and guide him in the way of salvation. He who thus looketh unto the Sun of righteousness, for light and direction, shall never be confounded.

6. *This poor man cried, and the* LORD *heard* him, *and saved him out of all his troubles.*

David, when he escaped from his enemies, might be "poor" and destitute. But HE was emphatically "the poor man," who became so for our sakes; who not only possessed nothing, but desired nothing in this world. HE "cried, and Jehovah heard him, "and delivered him out of all his troubles;" as he

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will hear and deliver the "poor in spirit," who pray unto him. For,

7. *The angel of the* LORD *encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.*

The divine protection and salvation, vouchsafed to the faithful, is here signified, whether we suppose that by "the angel of Jehovah," is meant the presence of Christ in the church militant, as of old in the camp of Israel; or the ministration of created spirits to the heirs of salvation, as in the case of Elisha: 2 Kings vi. 17. Let the consideration of these invisible guardians, who are also spectators of our actions, at once restrain us from evil, and incite us to good.

8. *O taste and see that the* LORD is *good: blessed* is *the man* that *trusteth in him.*

David saw and tasted the goodness of Jehovah, when delivered from his adversaries: the Son of David when raised from the dead. Both invite us, by "trusting" in God, to behold and experience, in our own persons, the mercies and consolations of heaven.

9. *O fear the* LORD, *ye his saints: for* there is *no want to them that fear him.* 10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the* LORD *shall not want any good* thing.

He who seeketh the Lord, shall find him; and he who hath found Him, can want nothing. Faith, hope, charity, temperance, purity, patience, and contentment, are the true riches; and the lack of them, the poverty to be most dreaded; since to a Christian, persecution, loss, sickness, nay, death itself, is gain.

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In the mean time, God is never wanting to provide for his servants what he seeth needful and best, in matters temporal; while tyrants and oppressors, who are, in the world, what "lions" are in a forest, are often, by the just judgement of heaven, reduced to want that which they have ravished from others.

11. *Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the* LORD.

They who, by contemplating the advantages described above, which attend the fear of the Lord, are become desirous of obtaining that fear, must hearken to their heavenly Father, who by his prophet "speaketh unto them as unto children," offering to teach them the good and right way.

12. *What man* is he that *desireth life*, and *loveth* many *days, that he may see good?*

Every Christian professeth to "desire," not only an animal, but a spiritual "life;" to love, not an old age in time, but an eternal duration; that he may "see those good things" which God hath prepared, not upon earth, but in heaven, for them that love him. Let us observe, therefore, upon what terms such blessings are offered.

13. *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*

The tongue is an instrument of much good, or much evil. Life and death are in its power; he that keepeth it, keepeth his soul; and he who offendeth not therewith is a perfect man: it is an unruly member, and the first work of the fear of God must be to bridle it, that no profane, unclean, slanderous, deceitful, or idle words, proceed out of the mouth.

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And as the heart is to the tongue, what the fountain is to the stream, that must first be purified.

14. *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

Not the tongue only, but the whole man is to be corrected and regulated by the fear of God operating unto repentance from dead works, and, through faith, unto obedience of life. And he who hath thus obtained peace with God, must ever remember to follow peace with men, reconciling his brethren, if at variance; himself, if it be possible, being at variance with no one.

15. *The eyes of the* LORD *are upon the righteous, and his ears* are open *unto their cry.* 16. *The face of the* LORD *is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

The righteous may be afflicted, like David, and like a greater than David; and their oppressors may, for a time, be triumphant; but, in the end, the former will be delivered and exalted; the latter will either cease to be remembered, or they will be remembered with infamy.

17. The righteous *cry, and the* LORD *heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

This great and comforting truth, is attested by the history of the deliverances of Israel from Egypt, Babylon, &c.; of Jonah from the whale; of the three children from the flames, &c. wrought at the supplications of the respective parties in distress; but above all, by the salvation of the world, through the intercession of Jesus Christ. The death of martyrs is

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their deliverance; and the greatest of all deliverances.

18. *The* LORD *is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

We are apt to overlook men, in proportion as they are humbled beneath us; God regards them in that proportion. Vessels of honour are made of that clay, which is "broken" into the smallest parts.

19. *Many* are *the afflictions of the righteous: but the* LORD *delivereth him out of them all.*

Afflictions all must suffer; but those of the righteous end in victory and glory. What soldier would not cheerfully undergo the hardships of a campaign upon this condition? "In the world," saith the Captain of our salvation, "ye shall have tribulation; "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world:" John xvi. 33.

20. *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.*

It is God who preserveth to man the strength of his body, which lieth in the bones; and that vigour of his spirit, which consisteth in firm and well-established principles of faith and holiness. The bones of the true Paschal Lamb continued whole during the passion; and those of the saints shall be raised whole at the last day, when the mystical body of Christ shall come out of its sufferings no less perfect and entire, than did the natural.

21. *Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.*

The evil of punishment springs from the evil of

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sin; and no sin works such "desolation," as a malicious "hatred" and persecution of the true sons and servants of God. Whoso doubts the truth of this, let him only survey and consider attentively the desolation of the once highly favoured nation, for their enmity against the King of righteousness, and his faithful subjects.

22. *The* LORD *redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

The frequent prosperity of the wicked, and the troubles of the righteous in this world, strike powerfully upon the sense, and are, for that reason, too apt to efface from our minds the notices given us by faith, of that future inversion of circumstances which is to take place after death. To renew, therefore, the impression of such an interesting truth, the redemption of the afflicted righteous is so often insisted on in the course of this Psalm. Enable us, O Lord, to "walk by faith, and not by sight," until we come to thy heavenly kingdom; where, with all thy saints, made perfect through sufferings, we shall "bless and "magnify thee at all times," and thy "praise will "continually be in our mouth," for evermore.

SEVENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXV.

ARGUMENT.

The Prophet, in this Psalm, as in the xxiid, which it resembles, personating Messiah, in his state of

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humiliation and suffering, 1—3. beseecheth Jehovah to interpose in his behalf; 4—8. predicteth the confusion of his enemies, and 9, 10. his own triumph; 11—16. describeth the malice of his persecutors against him, and his love towards them; 17—25. repeateth his supplications for deliverance, and enlargeth upon the cruel insults he met with: 26. he again foretelleth the destruction of the adversary, and, 27, 28. the exultation of the faithful.

1. *Plead* my cause, *O* LORD, *with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.*

David, in his afflictions; Christ, in his passion; the church, under persecution; and the Christian, in the hour of temptation, supplicate the Almighty to appear in their behalf, and to vindicate their cause.

2. *Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.* 3. *Draw out also the spear, and stop* the way *against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I* am *thy salvation.*

Jehovah is here described, as a "man of war," going forth to the battle against the enemies of Messiah, and his church: the protection afforded by his mercy, is figured by the shield of the warrior, covering his body from the darts of the enemy; and the vengeance of his uplifted arm, is represented by the offensive weapons used among men, such as the spear and the sword. "If God be for us, who can be "against us?" If he speaketh salvation, who shall

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threaten destruction? See Deut. xxxii. 41. Wisdom v. 20.

4. *Let them be confounded*, or, *they shall be confounded, and put to shame, that seek after my soul: let them be*, or, *they shall be, turned back and brought to confusion, that devise my hurt.*

The consequence of the Omnipotent appearing in arms against his adversaries, is here foretold. And the prediction has long since been verified in the "confusion" of Saul, and of the Jews, as it will be finally fulfilled in that of Satan, and all his adherents, at the last day; for the manifestation of which day the church now waiteth, in faith and patience.

5. *Let them be*, or, *they shall be, as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the* LORD, or, *the angel of the* LORD *shall, chase* them.

The Jews, separated from the church and people of Christ, become useless and unprofitable to any good work, possessing only the empty ceremonies and husks of their religion, and by the breath of the divine displeasure dispersed over the face of the earth, afford a striking comment on this verse, and as striking an admonition to every opposer of the holy Jesus. See Psalm i. 4.

6. *Let their way*, or, *their way shall, be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the* LORD, or, *the angel of the* LORD *shall, persecute them.*

A traveller, benighted in a bad road, is an expressive emblem of a sinner walking in his slippery and dangerous ways of temptation, without knowledge to direct his steps, to show him the danger, or to extricate him from it; while an enemy is in pursuit of

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him, whom he can neither resist nor avoid. Deliver us, O Lord, from all blindness, but, above all, from that which is judicial!

7. *For without cause have they hid from me their net in a pit,* which *without cause they have digged for my soul.* 8. *Let destruction,* or, *destruction shall, come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid,* or, *his net that he hath hid shall, catch himself: into that very destruction let him,* or, *he shall, fall.*

The causeless persecution raised against David by Saul, and against our Lord by the Jews, reverted, through the righteous judgement of God, on the heads of the persecutors. The innocent birds escaped; and they who set the toils, were themselves taken therein. Saul lost the kingdom which he thought to have secured, and his life also; and the Jews who crucified Christ, lest "the Romans should "take away their place and nation," had their place and nation taken away by those Romans, for that very reason. In these histories, all impenitent persecutors of the faith, the church, and the servants of God, may read their doom.

9. *And my soul shall be joyful in the* LORD: *it shall rejoice in his salvation.* 10. *All my bones shall say,* LORD, *who is like unto thee, who deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?*

These verses, as they describe the joy which the soul and body of Christ were to experience after the resurrection, so shall they one day be sung by the mystical body of the Lord, when delivered from the

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power of the spoiler, and raised entire from the dust. In the mean time, they may express our gratitude for any temporal preservation from enemies, from sad casualties, and dangerous temptations.

11. *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge,* Heb. *asked me,* things *that I knew not.* 12. *They rewarded me evil for good,* to *the spoiling of my soul.*

This was never more literally true of David, than it was of the holy Jesus, when, standing before Pontius Pilate, he received no other return from the Jews, for all the gracious words which he had spoken, and all the merciful works which he had done among them, than that of being slandered, and put to death.

13. *But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing* was *sackcloth: I humbled,* or, *afflicted, my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*

If David prayed, fasting in sackcloth, for Saul, and his associates, the Son of David, to heal the souls of men, put on the veil of mortal flesh, and appeared in the form and habit of a penitent, fasting forty days and forty nights, making continual intercession for transgressors, and grieving to think that any men, by their obstinacy, should deprive themselves of the benefits thereof.

14. *I behaved myself,* Heb. *I walked, as though* he had been *my friend* or *brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth* for his *mother,* or, *as a mother that mourneth.*

He who so passionately lamented the natural death

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of Saul, doubtless bewailed greatly his spiritual death of sin; and he who took a comprehensive view of the sins and sorrows of Jerusalem, wept over that wretched city, with the tender affection of a "friend," a "brother," and a "mother"—"O Jerusalem, Jeru-"salem, how often would I have gathered thy child-"ren together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens "under her wings!"

15. *But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together:* yea, *the abjects,* or, *smiters, gathered themselves together against me, and I knew* it *not; they did tear* me, *and ceased not.*

When the blessed Jesus was suffering for the sins of men, he was insulted by those men for whose sins he suffered. He gave, not only his reputation to the revilers, but also his back to the "smiters," though not conscious of the crimes for which they pretended to punish him.

16. *With hypocritical mockers in feasts,* or, *among the profligates the makers of mock, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.*

However this might be true in the case of David, it certainly had a literal accomplishment in the scoffs and taunts of the chief priests, and others, when Christ was hanging on the cross—"Ah, thou that "destroyest the temple," &c. "He trusted in "God," &c. "Let him come down from the cross," &c. &c. &c. Nay, one of the thieves, crucified with him, "cast the same in his teeth." Whosoever considers these things, will not be suprised at the expostulation in the following verse:

17. Lord, *how long wilt thou look on? Rescue*

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my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

Christ prayeth, like David of old, for the manifestation of the promised mercy: for the deliverance of the nature which he had assumed, and which he delighted in. Who does not behold, in him, surrounded by his enraged and implacable enemies, a second Daniel, praying in the den of "lions?"

18. *I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people,* or, *the strong people.*

This verse is exactly parallel to Psal. xxii. 25. wherein, after an enumeration of his sufferings, our Lord predicteth the praise and glory that should accrue to God in the church, after his resurrection, from the preaching of the apostles; which passage see, and compare; as also Isai. xxv. 3. and Rev. vii. 9.

19. *Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me:* neither *let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.*

The Prophet, in the person of Christ, returneth again to make supplication, that an end may be put to the insults, the scoffs, and the sneers, of the reprobate. O come that day, when they shall cease for evermore!

20. *For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against* them that are *quiet in the land.* 21. *Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me,* and *said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen* it.

David would have lived "quietly" under the government of Saul: our Lord did not aim at temporal sovereignty over the Jews; nor did the primitive

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Christians desire to intermeddle with the politics of the world; yet all were betrayed, mocked, and persecuted, as rebels and usurpers, and the pests of society.

22. This *thou hast seen, O* LORD: *keep not silence: O* LORD, *be not far from me.* 23. *Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgement,* even *unto my cause, my God and my Lord.* 24. *Judge me, O* LORD *my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.*

God "seeth" and knoweth all things; yet he permitteth those who love him best, to be often and long afflicted and oppressed, seeming as one at a "distance," or "silent," or "asleep," that is, regardless of what passes. At such times, we are not to remit, but to double our diligence in prayer, reiterating our cries—"LORD save us! we perish." Then will he "awake and arise, and rebuke the winds and "the seas, and there shall be a calm."

25. *Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*

Messiah prayeth for an end of his sufferings; that the enemies of mankind might not triumph in his destruction; that death might not finally "swallow him "up," but be itself "swallowed up in victory." The church daily maketh the same request.

26. *Let them,* or, *they shall, be ashamed and brought to confusion together, that rejoice at mine hurt: let them,* or, *they shall, be clothed with shame and dishonour, that magnify* themselves *against me.*

The accomplishment of this prediction, by the re-

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surrection of Jesus, and the destruction of Jerusalem, is well known. There are two events to come parallel to those two which are past, viz. the resurrection of the faithful, and the destruction of the world; when all who, like the Jews, have "rejoiced "in the hurt" of Messiah, and have "magnified "themselves against him," will, like the Jews, be covered with everlasting "confusion."

27. *Let them*, or, *they shall, shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them*, or, *they shall, say continually, Let the* LORD *be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.* 28. *And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness*, and *of thy praise, all the day long.*

As the preceding verse foretold the sorrow of the enemies, so these two describe the joy of the friends to Messiah upon his victory and exaltation, which have been, and shall continue to be, celebrated by the church in these divine hymns, indited by the Holy Spirit for that purpose, until the songs of time shall end in the hallelujahs of eternity.

PSALM XXXVI.

ARGUMENT.

In the first four verses of this Psalm, the Prophet describeth the principles, the actions, the conversation, and the imaginations of his wicked persecutors; and from thence raising his thoughts to heaven, 5—9. celebrateth the mercy and loving

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kindness of Jehovah; for a continuation of which to himself and the church, he fervently prayeth, 10, 11; and 12. foreseeth the downfall of the ungodly.

1. *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart,* that there is *no fear of God before his eyes.*

If the present reading in the original be the true one, the meaning must be this—The transgressions of a bad man show plainly, in the apprehension of a good one, that the former is destitute of a true fear of God. Bishop Lowth, by a slight alteration or two in the text, renders it to this effect—"The wicked man, according to the wickedness in his heart, "saith, There is no fear of God before mine eyes *." The great truth which the Prophet here declareth himself to be convinced of, is, that all wickedness proceedeth from the absence of "the fear of God," in the person who committeth it; that fear being a principle which, while it is predominant in the man, will restrain him from transgression. Our laws suppose as much, when, in the form of indicting a criminal, they attribute the commission of the offence to his "not having the fear of God before his eyes."

2. *For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful;* or, *when his sin is ready to be found out, and to be hated.*

He who hath lost "the fear of God," is first led into sin, and then detained in it; because, having forgotten the great witness and judge of his actions,

* See Merrick's Annotations.

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he vainly thinks his crimes may be concealed, or disguised, till a discovery breaks the charm, and disperses the delusion. The last day will show strange instances of this folly.

3. *The words of his mouth* are *iniquity and deceit; he hath left off to be wise,* and *to do good;* or, *to understand, that he may do good.*

If the fear of God be not in the heart, "iniquity "and deceit" will be under the tongue; and then, an apostacy from wisdom and goodness, or the wisdom of goodness, which is the only true wisdom, cannot be far off.

4. *He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way* that is *not good; he abhorreth not evil.*

From the actions and the words of him who hath not the fear of God before his eyes, the Prophet goeth back to the thoughts and imaginations of his heart, which, even in retirement and solitude, are busily employed upon evil, as those of the righteous are, at those seasons, upon God and goodness. A man may know the state of his mind, in some measure, from his morning and evening thoughts "upon "his bed." He who doth not give diligence to "set "himself in a good way," will soon be set in one that is not good; and he who doth not "abhor" sin, will, ere long, delight in it.

5. *Thy mercy, O* LORD, is *in the heavens;* and *thy faithfulness* reacheth *unto the clouds,* or, *skies.* 6. *Thy righteousness* is *like the great mountains; thy judgements* are *a great deep.*

From the wickedness of the world, in which we

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live, we must lift up our eyes for help and comfort, to the mercy and truth of God, boundless, pure, and beneficial, as the heavens over our heads; to his righteousness, fixed and permanent as the everlasting hills; and to his judgements, stupendous and unfathomable as the waters of the great deep. Truth will engage mercy to accomplish the promised salvation of the elect; and righteousness will employ judgement in executing upon the reprobate the vengeance that is due.

7. *O* LORD, *thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.*

The good providence of God extendeth over all creatures, nourishing and preserving them, as well as man, for whose use they were made. We can never enough value and extol the "loving kindness" of him, whose overshadowing "wings" protect and cherish us on earth, in order to bear us from thence to heaven. See Matt. xxiii. 37; Deut. xxxii. 11.

8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.*

In heaven alone the thirst of an immortal soul after happiness can be satisfied. There the streams of Eden will flow again. They who drink of them shall forget their earthly poverty, and remember the miseries of the world no more. Some drops from the celestial cup are sufficient, for a time, to make us forget our sorrows, even while we are in the midst of them. What then may we not expect from full

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draughts of those pleasures which are at thy right hand, O Lord, for evermore?

9. *For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light.*

The rivers before mentioned flow from a "foun-"tain" which fetcheth not supplies from without, but whose spring is within itself, and therefore can never be exhausted. The "water of life" proceeds from "the throne of God and the Lamb:" Rev. xxii. 1. "This is life eternal, to know thee the "only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast "sent:" John xvii. 3. God, like the sun, cannot be seen, but by the light which he himself emits.

10. *O continue thy loving kindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.*

The Prophet, groaning under the oppression of the wicked, who are described in the first part of the Psalm, prayeth for a continuation of the mercies of God, which he has celebrated in the second part. Give us, O God, the knowledge of thee, and make us upright in heart, that thy loving kindness and thy righteousness may be our portion for ever.

11. *Let not the foot of pride come against me; and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.*

The Christian has reason enough to join with the Prophet in this petition, whether we suppose it to deprecate destruction from proud men and sinners without us, or from pride and sin within us.

12. *There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.*

Faith calleth things that be not, as though they

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were; it carries us forward to the end of time; it shows us the Lord, sitting on the throne of judgement; the righteous caught up to meet him in the air; the world in flames under his feet; and the empire of sin fallen to rise no more.

SEVENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXVII.

ARGUMENT.

From the beginning to the end of this Psalm, the Holy Spirit, by the Prophet, administereth advice and consolation to the church and people of the Lord, oppressed and afflicted in the world, by prosperous and triumphant wickedness. Faith and patience are, therefore, recommended, upon the double consideration of that sure reward which awaiteth the righteous, and that certain punishment which shall be inflicted on the wicked. These two events are set before us in a variety of expressions, and under many lively and affecting images. As the Psalm is rather a collection of divine aphorisms on the same subject, than a continued and connected discourse, it admitteth of nothing farther in the way of argument.

1. *Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* 2.

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For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

The Holy Spirit here prescribeth a remedy to a very common, and no less dangerous disorder of the mind, namely, a distrust of God's providence, occasioned by frequently beholding the prosperity of the wicked, in this present world. He who alloweth himself time to consider, how soon the fairest spring must give place to a burning summer, a blighting autumn, and a killing winter, will no longer envy, but pity, the fading virtue of the grass, and the still more transient glories of the flowers of the field. Herbs and plants are medicinal in more senses than one *.

3. *Trust in the* LORD, *and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed:* or, *dwell in the land, and feed on truth,* or *faithfulness.*

The consideration of the speedy and tragical end of sinners, affordeth a powerful argument for perseverance in faith and holiness; for continuing in the church, and making our abode in the pastures of truth; until, in the strength of that sacred viand, we come to the heavenly land of promise, and dwell therein for ever.

4. *Delight thyself also in the* LORD; *and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

He who delighteth in the creature, hath not always "the desires of his heart" granted, nor is it fit that he should have them; but he who delighteth in God,

* See an elegant and beautiful discourse on "the lilies of "the field;" published among the Sermons of the late learned, ingenious, and worthy Dr. Tottie.

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will desire what he delighteth in, and obtain what he desireth.

5. *Commit thy way unto the* LORD; *trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.* 6. *And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgement as the noon day.*

Malice and calumny may, for a time, overshadow the splendour of an holy character; but the sun will come forth, and the clouds will fly away. This was most eminently true of the blessed Jesus, at his resurrection, and will be verified in his saints, at the last day. The history of Susannah affordeth a remarkable instance of it in this life. "Her heart "trusted in the Lord, and he brought forth her righ- "teousness as the light; insomuch that all the as- "sembly cried out with a loud voice, and praised "GOD, who saveth them that trust in him." Ver. 35. 60.

7. *Rest in,* or, *be silent to, the* LORD, *and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in the way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*

If the spotless Lamb of God was dumb, before those who were divesting him of his honours, and robbing him of his life, "silent" resignation cannot but become one who suffers for his sins. Israel was commanded to "stand still, and see the salvation of "God;" but the people gazed upon the pomp and power of Pharaoh, who was in pursuit of them, till their faith failed, and they began to murmur and despond. How often is this our case, before we perceive it!

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8. *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.* 9. *For evil-doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the* LORD, *they shall inherit the earth.*

At the day of judgement, when "evil-doers shall "be cut off" by the flaming sword of eternal vengeance, and when the saints of the Most High shall "inherit the new earth," the latter will have no emotions of anger or envy against the former. Let them so meditate on that day, as to make it present to their minds, and they will have no such emotions now.

10. *For yet a little while, and the wicked* shall *not* be: *yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it* shall *not* be.

The whole duration of the world itself is but "a "little while" in the sight of him, whose hope is full of immortality. But the calamities and deaths of princes; the tragical fate of empires, swept with the besom of destruction; the overthrow of cities, whose dimensions, towers, and palaces, once astonished the earth, but whose "place" is now no where to be found by the most curious and diligent inquirer; and the desolations of the chosen city, Jerusalem; all these are even now sufficient to draw forth the tear of commiseration, and to extinguish the kindling spark of envy in every considerate mind.

11. *But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

The "meek" are they who bear their own adversities, and the prosperity of their enemies, without envy, anger, or complaint. For these there is a pos-

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session in the kingdom and city of "the Prince of "Peace," which "the Lord, the righteous judge, shall "give them at that day." "Blessed are the meek," saith the Lord and judge himself, "for they shall "inherit the earth:" Matt. v. 5. "In the mean time, "they, and they only, possess the present earth, as "they go towards the kingdom of heaven, by being "humble, and cheerful, and content, with what their "good God has allotted them. They have no tur-"bulent, repining, vexatious thoughts that they de-"serve better, nor are vexed when they see others "possessed of more honour, or more riches, than "their wise God has allotted for their share. But "they possess what they have with a meek and con-"tented quietness; such a quietness as makes their "very dreams pleasing, both to God and themselves." Walton's Complete Angler, p. 295.

12. *The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.* 13. *The* LORD *shall laugh at him; for he seeth that his day is coming.*

The original enmity between the Wicked One and the Just One, will always subsist between the wicked and the just. The rage of the former against the latter is compared to that of mad dogs, or wild beasts; but a day is coming when all that rage must be turned and employed against themselves. God, who knoweth this, contemneth their vain efforts; and Christians, who know it, and are under the protection of God, should do the same.

14. *The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and*

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needy, and *to slay such as be of upright conversation*, or, *upright of way*. 15. *Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bow shall be broken.*

The tongue is a "sword," and a "bow" which shooteth its arrows, even bitter words, against the humble and upright Jesus, and his disciples. But these are not the only weapons that have been drawn against them. How the malice of the Jews returned upon their own heads, no one is ignorant; though few lay it to heart, and consider them as set forth for an example.

16. *A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.* 17. *For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the* LORD *upholdeth the righteous.*

A little, with the blessing of God upon it, is better than a great deal, with the encumbrance of his curse. His blessing can multiply a mite into a talent, but his curse will shrink a talent to a mite. By him "the "arms of the wicked are broken," and by him "the "righteous are upholden;" so that the great question is, whether HE be with us, or against us; and the great misfortune is, that this question is seldom asked.

18. *The* LORD *knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be for ever.* 19. *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*

The favour of God is, to them that obtain it, a better and an enduring substance, which, like the widow's barrel and cruse, wasted not in the evil days of famine, nor will fail in that evil day of eternal

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want, when the foolish virgins shall be calling in vain for oil, and the rich glutton as vainly imploring a drop of water to cool his tongue.

20. *But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the* LORD shall be *as the fat of lambs: they shall consume, into smoke shall they consume away.*

The destruction of the wicked is here again set before us, but under a different image, namely, that of a sacrifice. Senseless, as cattle, they are fatted for the altar, they wanton in their prosperity, and nourish their hearts against the day of slaughter. In the mean time, the Almighty is whetting that sword, which nothing can withstand; and those fires are kindling, which shall never be extinguished. See Isa. xxxiv. 6—10.

21. *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; but the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth.*

The wicked man, like his leader, the "wicked "one," payeth not those whose money or abilities he hath occasion to borrow, and to employ in his service; whereas the disciple of Christ, in imitation of his master, not only punctually observeth the rules of justice and equity, but thinketh it "more "blessed to give than to receive." In like manner, though both are indebted, for every thing, to the bounty of God, the latter maketh all the acknowledgements and returns in his power; while the former never thinketh of making any.

22. *For*, or, *therefore*, such as be *blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and* they that be *cursed of him shall be cut off.*

They who are like their merciful and gracious

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Lord, and who, by their devotion and charity, bless him, are blessed of him; they who are like their cruel and iniquitous master, and who, by their ungodliness, injustice, and hard-heartedness, dishonour their Maker and Redeemer, are cursed of him. To the former therefore, it will be said, at the last day, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom;" to the latter, "Go, ye cursed, into the fire."

23. *The steps of a* good *man are ordered,* Heb. *established, by the* LORD; *and he delighteth in his way.* 24. *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the* LORD *upholdeth* him with *his hand.*

This was emphatically true of the man Christ, whose steps Jehovah established, and in whose way he delighted; who, "though he fell" by death, yet was raised again by his mighty hand and outstretched arm. It is true likewise of Christians, whom it should support and comfort, in all dangers and temptations. See, for a parallel, Psal. xci.

25. *I have been young, and* now *am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* 26. He is *ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed* is *blessed.*

So far is charity from impoverishing, that what is given away, like vapours emitted by the earth, returns in showers of blessings into the bosom of the person who gave it; and his offspring is not the worse, but infinitely the better for it. "The liberal "soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall "be watered also himself:" Prov. xi. 25. The bread which endureth, as well as that which perisheth, is

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his; and the blessings of time are crowned with those of eternity.

27. *Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.* 28. *For the* LORD *loveth judgement, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.* 29. *The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.*

The justice and mercy of God, the rewards which await the righteous, and the punishments that will, sooner or later, be inflicted on the wicked, are subjects on which whoever shall frequently meditate, "will depart from evil, and do good. Whatsoever "thou takest in hand," saith the wise son of Sirach, "remember the END, and thou shalt never do amiss." Ecclus. vii. 36.

30. *The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgement.* 31. *The law of his God* is *in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*

The word which is here, as in other places innumerable, translated "the righteous," is in the singular number, and might therefore be translated "the Righteous One," or, "the Just One;" for it is often designed to point him out to us, who is emphatically so styled; whose "mouth" always spake "wisdom," in whose "heart was the law of God," and whose "steps" NEVER declined to evil. Lord, put thy laws into our hearts, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth may speak; and as the mouth speaks, the hands may act, and the feet may walk.

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32. *The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.* 33. *The* LORD *will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.*

The Jews "watched" that "Just One," daily and hourly; they "sought to slay him," and did so; but "Jehovah left him not in their hands," but vindicated his innocence, by raising him from the dead. And the day is coming, when he who hath stood tamely at the bar of men, and hath suffered for truth and righteousness, shall be advanced to a throne among the saints and martyrs, to assist at the trial of his once-insulting judges.

34. *Wait on the* LORD *and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*

The apostle, writing to the Hebrew converts, under affliction and persecution, thus expresseth the sentiment contained in this verse: "Cast not away "your confidence, which hath great recompense of "reward. For ye have need of patience, that after "ye have done the will of God, ye might receive "the promise. For yet a little while, and he that "shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Heb. x. 35.

35. *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree,* or, *a native tree, which has grown from the seed without transplantation, in the same spot.* 36. *Yet he passed away, and, lo, he* was *not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.*

The great Babylonian monarch had his own exaltation, and subsequent degradation, portrayed to

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him, in a vision, under this very image, which conveyed to the mind a most striking and affecting idea of the rise and fall of men and empires, which have now no existence but in history. "I saw, and be-" hold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height "thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, "and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and "the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The "leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, "and it was meat for all: the beasts of the field "had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven "dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of "it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, "and behold a watcher and an holy one can down "from heaven. He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew "down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off "his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts "get away from under it, and the fowls from his "branches:" Dan. iv. 10, 11, &c. See the Prophet's exposition, 20, 21, &c. and what is said above, on ver. 10. of this Psalm.

37. *Mark the perfect* man, *and behold the upright: for the end of* that *man* is *peace.* 38. *But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.*

After taking a view of those short-lived honours, which the world setteth upon the heads of its most favoured votaries, let us turn our eyes to "the Per-" fect and Upright One;" let us behold the permanent greatness and the unfading glory of the TREE OF LIFE, which is in the midst of the paradise of

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God; whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and whose fruit is the fruit of "peace."

39. *But the salvation of the righteous* is *of the* LORD: he is *their strength in the time of trouble.* 40. *And the* LORD *shall help them, and deliver them; he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they put their trust in him.*

Of thee, O Lord Jesu, is our salvation: be thou our strength in this mortal life, which is a time of trouble; help us against our spiritual enemies, and deliver us from them; deliver us from the wicked one, and from all evil; and save us from the guilt and punishment thereof, because we put our trust in thee, and in thee alone.

EIGHTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, which is the third of those styled Penitential, the sinner, ver. 1. prayeth to be chastened only, and not destroyed; 2—10. describeth the state of his soul under various images, chiefly borrowed from bodily diseases and pains; 11, 12. complaineth of his friends forsaking, and his enemies persecuting him; but, 13—15. continueth patient and resigned, committing his cause to God, whom, 16—22. he beseecheth to help him, on his confession and repentance. As our Lord took

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upon him the guilt, and suffered the punishment, of sin; as there are some passages in the latter part of the Psalm, literally predictive of his passion, and so understood by the best ancient expositors; and as the sinner should be led by his own sorrows to reflect on those of his Redeemer; the meditations of the reader are, therefore, under each particular, directed by the ensuing comment into that channel.

1. O LORD, *rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*

The petition here preferred, as in the sixth Psalm, is, that Jehovah would not condemn as a judge, but chasten as a father, for the amendment and preservation of the offender. The same prayer, which we sinners make for ourselves, Christ, who bore our sins, once made for us.

2. *For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.*

The "arrows" and the "hand" of God, are his judgements on sin; those internal pangs and terrors which pierce the soul, and those external afflictions and calamities which sink and weigh down the spirits. The holy Jesus, at the time of his passion, received these arrows, and sustained this weight, for the sins of the whole world.

3. There is *no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither* is there any *rest,* or, *peace,* or, *health, in my bones, because of my sin.*

The expressions in this verse are applicable to the

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disorders and diseases which sin hath introduced both into the soul and into the body, as the terms, "health," and "sickness," are in Scripture no less frequently employed to describe the state of the former, than that of the latter. If a single sinner thus complaineth of his grief and pain, what must have been the agony and passion of him who suffered for all, mercifully and lovingly submitted to be "made sin for us?"

4. *For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.*

Sins and sorrows are here, as in many other places, represented under the image of mighty waters rolling incessantly over the head of the person sunk into them, and by their accumulated weight depressing him, so that he can no more rise above them. Let us meditate on that deep and tempestuous ocean, into which we were the means of plunging the innocent Jesus.

5. *My wounds stink* and *are corrupt, through my foolishness.*

Sin is the wound of the soul, which must be washed with the tears of repentance, cleansed by the blood of Christ, and healed by the Spirit of the Holy One. It requires great care and attention, until the cure be completed. Otherwise, mortification and death ensue, as in the case of outward wounds, if neglected, or ill managed. See Isa. i. 6. Luke x. 34. All the sores and pains of the body mystical are lamented by him who is the head of that body, and who felt the sad effects of these corruptions of our nature, in the day of his sufferings.

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6. *I am troubled,* Heb. *writhed,* or, *distorted, I am bowed down greatly: I go mourning all the day long.*

As the body by pain, so the soul by guilt, is "distorted" from its original uprightness; it is "bowed down" to the earth, through shame and fear, being no longer able to look up towards heaven, with its accustomed holy confidence; and, instead of rejoicing in a good conscience, and the hope of glory, sorrow is its portion, and grief its familiar acquaintance. And what wonder, that we should be humbled and afflicted for our own sins, when the Son of God was so humbled and afflicted for sins not his own?

7. *For my loins are filled with a loathsome* disease, or, *inflammation: and* there is *no soundness in my flesh.*

The "disease," or, "inflammation," complained of, in these metaphorical terms, seems to be the distemperature of our fallen nature, whereby it cometh to pass, that "the flesh lusteth against the "spirit:" it is that "other law in our members, "warring against the law in our minds, bringing us "into captivity to the law of sin," and forcing every son of Adam to cry out—"O wretched man that I "am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Happy is it for us, that we are enabled to go on with the apostle, and to "thank God" that we are delivered, "through Jesus Christ our Lord," on whom were laid "the iniquities of us all."

8. *I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*

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The vigour of a man is broken in pieces, and wasted away, by pain and the disquietude from thence arising, which cause piercing cries, and loud lamentations. When sin in the soul is felt like sickness in the body, it will produce effects in some degree similar. Let us reflect on the sufferings, the cries, and the tears, of our Redeemer.

9. LORD, *all my desire* is *before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.*

The "desires" and "groans" of the penitent are known to God, and marked down in his book; and there is no small comfort in thinking and acknowledging that they are so; but much more comfort is there in the remembrance of those inconceivable "desires," and those unutterable "groanings," which the holy Jesus poured forth for us in the days of his flesh, and which prevail for the acceptance of our own.

10. *My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.*

In bodily sickness, there are three symptoms of approaching dissolution; and the soul is in great extremity, when the three corresponding symptoms appear upon her; namely, when she hath neither resolution to will, power to perform, nor knowledge to discern the things that belong unto her health and peace.

11. *My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore*, or, *plague*, or, *affliction; and my kinsmen*, or, *my neighbours, stand afar off.*

A body afflicted with a noisome distemper, and a soul troubled on account of sin, find but few friends,

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who have charity enough to stay with, and to minister to them. Let us not be surprised, or offended, at this, when we see the righteous Jesus, at his passion, destitute and forsaken by all; as it is written, "Then "all the disciples forsook him, and fled;" Matt. xxvi. 56.; "and all his acquaintance, and the "women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar "off, beholding these things." Luke xxiii. 49.

12. *They also that seek after my life, lay snares* for me: *and they that seek my hurt, speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.* 13. *But I, as a deaf* man, *heard not; and I* was *as a dumb man,* that *openeth not his mouth.* 14. *Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth* are *no reproofs,* or, *altercations.*

These verses describe and recommend to our imitation the behaviour of David, and of a greater than David, when under persecution; the former from Absalom, Ahithophel, Shimei, &c. the latter from the chief priests and elders, Judas, and the Jews.

15. *For in thee, O* LORD, *do I hope,* or, *thee do I wait for: thou wilt hear,* or, *answer, O* LORD *my God.*

This verse assigns the reason why the ill usage which we receive at the hands of men, should be borne with patience and resignation; namely, because, as it is not without the permission, so neither will it be without the notice, of the Almighty, who will one day take the matter into his own hands. Christ, saith St. Peter, "who did no sin, neither was "guile found in his mouth, yet when he was reviled, "reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened

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"not; but committed himself to him that judgeth "righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 22.

16. *For I said,* Hear me, *lest* otherwise *they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify* themselves *against me.*

As the glory of God may be said, in some measure, to depend on the behaviour and fate of his servants; on that account, besides the stings of conscience, temporal punishments, and the danger of eternal torments, good men should ever have before their eyes the dishonour which is brought on the name of God, and the stop which is put to the progress of his Gospel, by the fall of any eminently righteous and holy person into sin.

17. *For I* am *ready to halt, and my sorrow* is *continually before me.* 18. *For I will declare mine iniquity: I will be sorry for my sin.*

The surest way to have our weakness strengthened, and our sin forgiven, is to acknowledge and confess both; and this we need not be ashamed to do, when we consider, that he, who is the Lord strong and mighty, took our infirmities; and the King of righteousness bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree.

19. *But mine enemies* are *lively,* and *they are strong, and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.* 20. *They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow* the thing that *good* is.

These words, joined with the preceding, are applicable to the distress of David, and the prosperity of his adversaries; to the sufferings of Christ, and the triumph of the Jews; to the afflictions of the

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church, and the gaiety of the world; to the weakness of faith, and the strength of nature. The result of all is this, that salvation cometh of God only, and is to be implored in the following words, which conclude the Psalm:

21. *Forsake me not, O* LORD; *O my God, be not far from me.* 22. *Make haste to help me, O* LORD *God of my salvation.*

PSALM XXXIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Prophet, in a state of distress and persecution, determineth, 1—3. to be watchful and silent, as our blessed Lord also was, before his enemies. 4. He prayeth for a due sense of the shortness of human life; and after meditating, 5, 6. on that subject, fixeth all his faith and hope in God, 7. whom he entreateth, but with submission to his will, 8—10. for the remission of sin, and alleviation of misery. 11. From a view of the human body wearing away by sickness, he breaketh out 12, 13. into a most fervent and affectionate prayer, which ought to be continually in the mouth of the Christian, upon earth.—This Psalm is, with the utmost propriety, appointed by the church to be used at the burial of the dead, as a funeral is indeed the best comment upon it.

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1. *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*

The Psalm begins abruptly with the result of a meditation on the narrow, slippery, and dangerous paths of life; and more especially on the extreme difficulty of restraining the tongue, amidst the continual temptations and provocations of the adversary. In these circumstances, "watchfulness" and "silence" are resolved on, as the only means of security. Let us behold the Lamb of God, as our great pattern and example herein.

2. *I was dumb with silence, I held my peace* even *from good, and my sorrow was stirred.*

There is a time to keep silence, because there are men who will not hear; there are tempers, savage and sensual as those of swine, before whom evangelical pearls, or the treasures of heavenly wisdom, are not to be cast. This consideration stirreth up fresh grief and trouble, in a pious and charitable heart. How much more must it have done so, in the soul of him who lived and died only for the salvation of sinners!

3. *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned:* then *spake I with my tongue.*

The fire of divine Charity, thus prevented from diffusing itself, for the illumination and warmth of those around it, and, like other fire, rendered more intense by its confinement, presently ascended, in the flame of devotion, towards heaven; while it continued to be fed, and preserved in brightness and vi-

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gour, by meditation on the goodness of God, and the ingratitude of man; the transient miseries of time, and the durable glories of eternity.

4. LORD, *make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days what it* is: that *I may know how frail* I am.

Wearied with the contradiction of sinners, and sickening at the prospect of so much wretchedness in the valley of weeping, the soul looks forward to her departure from hence, praying for such a sense of the shortness of human life, as may enable her to bear the sorrows of this world, and excite her to prepare for the joys of a better. "O faithless and "perverse generation," saith even the meek and patient Jesus himself, "how long shall I be with you, "how long shall I suffer you?" Matt. xvii. 17.

5. *Behold, thou hast made my days* as *an hand-breadth, and mine age* is *as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state,* Heb. *settled,* is *altogether vanity.*

The age of man, or that of the world, is but a "span" in dimension, a moment in duration; nay, it is less than both; it is "nothing," if compared with the unmeasurable extent, and the unnumbered days, of eternity: every hour, from that of our birth, brings us so much nearer to our death: nor can we continue, for a second of time, in one stay. "Be-"hold," then, O Lord, the "vanity" of man; and be so merciful unto him, as to open his eyes, that he may behold it himself!

6. *Surely, every man walketh in a vain show,* or, *in a shadowy image: surely they are disquieted in*

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vain: he heapeth up riches, *and knoweth not who shall gather them.*

This world is, to the other, as a "shadow" to the substance; nay, temporal life, health, riches, honours, and pleasures, can hardly be called shadows of those which are eternal, in point of resemblance; though for their illusive and fleeting nature, they are shadows indeed. "The mortal state of man is "compounded of light and darkness; seeming to be "something, when really it is nothing; always alter-"ing, and ending on a sudden; nearest to disappear-"ing, when at full length; sure to continue no longer "than while the sun is above the horizon; but liable "to vanish, at the interposition of a cloud; and "when it is gone, leaving no track behind it." The fate of riches heaped up by misers, with unutterable care and anxiety, may convince us, how "vainly" men are "disquieted!"

7. *And now,* LORD, *what wait I for? My hope* is *in thee.*

The soul, that hath a true sense of the vanity of the creature, will at once fix her thoughts and affections on the Creator. A celebrated writer, describing a man of the world on his death-bed, hath expressed this sentiment with wonderful sublimity and elegance—"Whoever would know, how much piety "and virtue surpass all external goods, might here "have seen them weighed against each other, where "all that gives motion to the active, and elevation "to the eminent; all that sparkles in the eye of hope, "and pants in the bosom of suspicion; at once be-"came dust in the balance, without weight, and

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"without regard. Riches, authority, and praise, lose "all their influence, when they are considered as "riches, which to-morrow shall be bestowed upon "another; authority, which shall this night expire "for ever; and praise, which, however merited, or "however sincere, shall, after a few moments, be "heard no more *."

8. *Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish.*

Affliction hath then had its proper effect, when the sufferer is thereby convinced of sin, and therefore prayeth for a removal of the latter, as the only way to be delivered from the former. The "re-"proaches" of the foolish make no inconsiderable article in the account of a Christian's sufferings; and our Lord frequently complaineth of them, in the Psalms, as one of the bitter ingredients in his own cup.

9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst* it.

Whatever materials compose the rod of affliction, and from whatsoever quarter the stroke cometh, let us remember, that the rod is grasped, and the stroke is inflicted, by the hand of our heavenly Father. To revenge ourselves on the instrument, is folly; to murmur against the agent, is something worse.

10. *Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thy hand.*

The Christian, who knows from whence his troubles proceed, knows where to apply for relief; and

* Rambler, Vol. II. No. 54.

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having first "petitioned" for remission of sin, ver. 8. he then humbly supplicates for a mitigation of his sorrow. "Father," saith the beloved Son of God, "if thou be willing, remove this cup from me." Luke xxii. 42.

11. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty,* or, *all that is delightful,* or, *desirable in him, to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity.*

The body of man is as a "garment" to the soul: in this garment sin hath lodged a "moth," which by degrees, fretteth and weareth away, first, the beauty, then the strength, and, finally the contexture of its parts. Whoever has watched the progress of a consumption, or any other lingering distemper, nay, the slow and silent devastations of time alone, in the human frame, will need no farther illustration of this just and affecting similitude; but will discern at once, the propriety of the reflection, which follows upon it:—"Surely every man is "vanity!"

12. *Hear my prayer, O* LORD, *and give ear unto my cry: hold not thy peace at my tears; for* I am *a stranger with thee,* and *a sojourner, as all my fathers* were.

Meditation should terminate in devotion; and meditation on human vanity and misery, if indulged as it deserves to be, certainly will do so; it will bring us to our "prayers," our "cries, and our "tears;" and teach us to address the throne of grace, as poor pilgrims in a strange land, who have here no abiding city, but are soon to strike our tents, and be gone

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for ever. Such was David, though king of Israel; and such was the Son of David, in the body of his flesh, though Lord of all things: both were "strangers and sojourners, as all their fathers," Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were before them, and as all their children have been and shall be after them, upon the earth.

13. *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.*

Most fervently and affectionately, therefore, ought the Christian pilgrim to pray, that God would spare his life and respite the fatal sentence, until all that hath been decayed, through the frailty of nature, be renewed by the power of grace; that his perfect reconciliation with the Almighty may be accomplished, and his plenary pardon sealed in heaven, before he taketh his last farewell of the world, and ceaseth to have an existence in these regions of vanity and sorrow.

PSALM XL.

ARGUMENT.

It is plain, from ver. 6—8. of this Psalm, compared with Heb. x. 5. that the Prophet is speaking in the person of Christ, who, 1—5. celebrateth the deliverance wrought for his mystical body, the church, by his resurrection from the grave, effecting that of his members from the guilt and dominion of sin; for the abolition of which he declar-

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eth, 6—8. the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices, and mentioneth his own inclination to do the will of his Father, and 9, 10. to preach righteousness to the world. 11—13. He representeth himself as praying, while under his sufferings, for his own and his people's salvation; he foretelleth, 14, 15. the confusion and desolation of his enemies, and, 16. the joy and thankfulness of his disciples and servants; for the speedy accomplishment of which, 17. he preferreth a petition.

1. *I waited patiently for the* LORD, *and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*

In this verse we hear the voice of the meek Lamb of God, who, though never sorrow was like unto his sorrow, "waited patiently," till the time appointed by the Father came, when that sorrow should be turned into joy. Let not his disciples expect to "inherit the promises," otherwise than "through "faith and patience." Four thousand years, the church, under the patriarchs, the law, and the prophets, waited for the first advent of Messiah; and, seventeen hundred years, the church, under the Gospel, hath waited for the second. Jehovah, who inclined himself to the prayers of the former, will also hear the cries of the latter.

2. *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit,* Heb. *a pit of confused tumultuous noise, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock,* and *established my goings.*

The sufferings from which our Redeemer was

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delivered, are here described under the image of a dark subterraneous cavern, from which there was no emerging, and where roaring cataracts of water broke in upon him, overwhelming him on every side; till, as it is expressed in the xviiith Psalm, "God sent "from above, and took him, and drew him out of "many waters." Let us celebrate the deliverance of Christ, as a pledge and earnest of our own rescue from the troubles and temptations of life; from the power of death and the grave; from the "horrible "pit, and the miry clay; when we shall be exalted on "the rock" of our salvation, and our "goings" shall be "established" for ever.

3. *And he hath put a new song in my mouth,* even *praise unto our* God: *many shall see* it, *and fear, and shall trust in the* Lord.

Every new deliverance requires "a new song." Christians sing their wonderful redemption, from sin and death, in these holy hymns, which God, by his Spirit, hath put into their mouths, and which, by their application to matters evangelical, are become "new" songs, setting forth the praise and glory of God, through Jesus Christ. And who can hear the church, singing the victory and triumph of her mighty and merciful Saviour, without being incited to "fear," and "to believe?"

4. *Blessed* is *that man that maketh the* Lord *his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.*

He who is sensible how much God hath done, and how little the world can do for him, will earnestly and heartily pronounce the blessedness of the man,

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who relies upon the real power and goodness of the former, instead of suffering himself to be deceived by the empty parade, and fallacious promises, of the latter.

5. *Many, O* LORD *my God,* are *thy wonderful works* which *thou hast done, and thy thoughts* which are *to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee:* if *I would declare and speak* of them, *they are more than can be numbered.*

The counsels and works of the ever-blessed Trinity, planned and executed for the benefit of man, in his creation and preservation, his redemption and sanctification, in order to his resurrection and glorification, through Christ, already risen and glorified, are subjects which can never be exhausted, by the intellectual powers of men or angels; but will, to both, afford matter of incessant meditation, and endless praise. Yet, how little do we meditate on them: how seldom, and how coldly, do we praise God for them!

6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.* 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book* it is *written of me,* 8. *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law* is *within my heart.*

These words, as the apostle informeth us, Heb. x. 5. are spoken by Christ, in his own person. In them he proclaims the inefficacy of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, and the divine disapprobation of such sacrifices, when relied on for that purpose. He sets forth his own readiness to do, and to suffer,

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the will of the Father, implied in the Psalm by the words—"mine ears hast thou opened;" but more plainly expressed in the apostle's citation, by the paraphrase, "a body hast thou prepared me *." He

* For the expression, "Mine ears hast thou opened," seems equivalent to—"Thou hast made me obedient." Thus, Isa. l. 5. "The Lord God hath opened mine ears, and I was not rebel-"lious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the "smiters," &c. The LXX, perhaps, meant to interpret this symbolical expression, when they rendered it by σωμα κατηρτισω μοι, "Thou hast prepared," or, "fitted my body," that is, to be "obedient," and to "do thy will." See Dr. Jackson, vol. ii. p. 882. This seems to be the best sense of the present reading, and is well expressed by Mr. Merrick, in his poetical version:

Nor sacrifice thy love can win,
Nor offerings from the stain of sin
Obnoxious man shall clear:
Thy hand my mortal frame prepares
(Thy hand, whose signature it bears),
And opes my willing ear.

Mr. Pierce of Exeter proposed a conjectural alteration of the word אזנים, "ears," into the two words, אז גוה, "then a body," &c. in which case, a learned friend suggests, כרית, must likewise be altered to כלית, "hast thou prepared, or finished." Bishop Lowth wishes to adopt Mr. Pierce's emendation, in order to render the original conformable to St. Paul's citation from the LXX. And I must confess, if the apostle's argument turned on the word σωμα, such an emendation might seem necessary. It is true, σωμα Χριστου occurs in the succeeding verse; but I think it not essential to the argument, which seems to stand clear and full, whatever be the meaning of σωμα κατηρτισω μοι—"When he "said, Sacrifice, &c. thou wouldest not—then he said, Lo, I "come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that "he may establish the second." The author of the anonymous notes in Mr. Merrick's Anotations, I find, is of this opinion. "It is not certain that the apostle argues from the word σωμα

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refers to the predictions concerning Messiah, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which is here styled —"the volume, or roll, of the book." He declares the pleasure he had in doing the Father's will, or in accomplishing the law; which had taken possession of all his powers and faculties; having been admitted by the understanding, retained in the memory, and rendered operative in the will. "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is "within my heart."

9. *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O* LORD, *thou knowest.* 10. *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*

As the preceding verses described the priestly office of our Lord, in the execution of which he offered himself, and his all-perfect obedience, for us; so, in the passage now before us, he declares himself to have acted up to the prophetical part of his character, by "preaching" the doctrines of truth, righteousness, and salvation, to the people, without concealing aught through negligence, fear, or favour. Happy the minister of Christ, who, on his death-bed, is able to say the same!

11. *Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from*

at all. "He quotes the translation of the LXX, as he found it "in his copy; lays a stress on what is in the Hebrew, but none "on the rest; either knowing it not to be there, or being re-"strained, by the Spirit of God, from making use of it." See Appendix to Mr. Merrick's Annot. p. 294.

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me, O LORD: *let thy loving kindness and thy truth alway preserve me.*

The beloved Son of God here prayeth for the continuation of that mercy, and the accomplishment of those gracious promises, to his body, the church, which made the subjects of his heavenly discourses, in the days of his flesh. Such ought to be the subjects of our discourses, and of our prayers.

12. *For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.*

If these words, as well as the foregoing, are supposed to be spoken by our Lord (and indeed there doth not appear to be any change of person), they must be uttered by him, considering himself (for so the primitive writers suppose him in the Psalms frequently to consider himself) as still suffering in his body mystical, the church; and lamenting, as head, both the transgressions and the afflictions of the members, accomplishing their warfare in the world. Thus much at least we know, that, after his ascension, when the members were persecuted on earth, the head complained from heaven, as sensible of the pain, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" Some critics think the word, עוני, in the text, may be translated "my punishment." But the author of the anonymous notes, mentioned below, observes that all "punishments, properly speaking, pre-supposes sin; and especially when they are represented, as here, to overtake and seize a person. Therefore, to understand this of Christ, it must be interpreted

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"of imputed sins, or punishments for them." Merrick's Annotat. p. 295.

13. *Be pleased, O* LORD, *to deliver me: O* LORD, *make haste to help me.*

This short, but forcible prayer, for help and deliverance, in God's good time, and according to his good pleasure, continues, and must continue, to be the prayer of the church, and of all her children, until the day of final redemption.

14. *Let them,* or, *they shall, be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it: let them,* or, *they shall, be driven backward, and put to shame, that wish me evil.* 15. *Let them,* or, *they shall, be desolate for a reward of their shame, that say unto me, Aha, aha!*

The shame, confusion, and desolation to be brought on the Jews by the resurrection, exaltation, and power of him whose blood they thirsted after, and whom they mocked and insulted when in his last agonies on the cross, are here foretold; and the prophecy hath been punctually fulfilled. But a more horrible confusion and desolation awaiteth them, and all other impenitent sinners, at the future revelation of the righteous judgement of God; when vengeance must destroy those, whom mercy cannot reclaim. And, to this ultimate issue of things, the church directeth her views.

16. *Let all those that seek thee,* or, *all those that seek thee shall, rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation,* or, *such as love thy salvation shall, say continually, The* LORD *be magnified.*

As the last verses predicted the calamities which

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should befall the enemies of Messiah, this describeth the unfeigned joy and gladness, springing up in the hearts of such as love the salvation of Jesus, and evermore magnify his holy name in the church, for the blessings of redemption, "eating their meat," as the first Christians are said to have done, "with "gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." Acts ii. 46.

17. *But I* am *poor and needy;* yet *the* LORD *thinketh upon me: thou* art *my help and deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.*

The church, like her Redeemer, is often poor and afflicted in this world, but Jehovah thinketh upon her, and is solicitous for her support; she is weak and defenceless, but Jehovah is her help and her deliverer. With such a Father and such a Friend, poverty becometh rich, and weakness itself is strong. In the mean time, let us remember, that he who once came in great humility, shall come again in glorious majesty. "Make no tarrying, O our God; but "come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Rev. xxii. 20.

EIGHTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XLI.

ARGUMENT.

The application made of the 9th verse of this Psalm, John xiii. 18. showeth, that the Prophet is speaking in the person of Messiah. 1—3. He declareth the blessedness of the man that considereth

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the poor; 4. he prayeth for mercy and favour; 5—9. describeth the behaviour of his adversaries, and of one person in particular; 10. petitioneth for deliverance; 11, 12. rejoiceth in hope; and, 13. breaketh out into thanksgiving.

1. *Blessed* is *he that considereth the poor: the* LORD *will deliver him in time of trouble:* Heb. *in the day of evil.*

As Christ considered us, in our state of poverty, so ought we most attentively to consider him, in his; to consider what he suffered in his own person; to discern him suffering in his poor afflicted members; and to extend to them the mercy which he extended to us. He, who was "blessed" of Jehovah, and "delivered in the evil day," by a glorious resurrection, will "bless" and "deliver," in like manner, such as, for his sake, love and relieve their brethren.

2. *The* LORD *will preserve him, and keep him alive,* or, *revive him;* and *he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*

The compassionate and charitable disciple of the holy Jesus is often wonderfully "preserved," and rendered prosperous, even in this world; but his greatest comfort is, that, like his Master, he shall one day be "revived," to inherit the "blessing," in a better country, where no "enemy" can approach to hurt or molest him.

3. *The* LORD *will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*

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An exemption from sorrow and sickness is not promised to the children of God; but strength and comfort are given unto them, from above, to support and carry them through their trials; and they who, in the days of their health, have, by their alms, given rest to the bodies, or, by their counsels, restored peace to the consciences, of others, shall have the bed of pain made easy under them, by the hand of their heavenly Father.

4. *I said,* LORD, *be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.*

Every son of Adam may, and ought, in these words, to acknowledge his sin, and to entreat for mercy and grace, to heal the disorders of his nature. If we suppose Messiah ever to have uttered this verse in his devotions, as we know he applied the 9th verse to his own case, it is obvious, that he must be understood to confess the sins, not of his own righteous person, but of the nature he had assumed, in order to cleanse and purify it by his sufferings. See above, Psal. xl. 12.

5. *Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?*

Here we may undoubtedly consider the poor and lowly Jesus, in the day of his humiliation, when he was daily and hourly calumniated by his adversaries; when, restless and impatient at beholding him still alive, they said—"What do we, for this man doth "many miracles? If we let him thus alone, all men "will believe on him. Perceive ye how ye prevail "nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him;" John xi. 47. xii. 19.: and when, grown more furious

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and clamorous, they cried, "Away with him, away "with him, crucify him, crucify him." How many, with the same bitterness of spirit, "speak evil" continually of his doctrines, his church, his ordinances, and his ministers; in effect, saying, "When shall he "die, and his name perish?"

6. *And if he come to see* me, *he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself;* when *he goeth abroad, he telleth* it.

Thus the enemies of Christ "sent out spies, who "should feign themselves just men, that they might "take hold of his words, that so they might deliver "him unto the power and authority of the governor;" Luke xx. 20. Thus Judas sat down at the last supper, all the while meditating the destruction of his Master; till at length, rising from table, and going abroad, he put his design in execution: and thus the mystical body of Christ frequently suffers, as his natural body once did, by means of hypocrites and traitors.

7. *All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.* 8. *An evil disease,* say they, Heb. *a word,* or, *matter, of Belial,* namely, the crime charged upon him, *cleaveth fast unto him; and* now *that he lieth, he shall rise up no more.*

The whispers of the Pharisees, the counsels of the sanhedrim, and their taunts and scoffs at the blessed Jesus, when on the cross, "numbered with the "transgressors," nor ever expected to "arise" again from the dead, are here most significantly and plainly pointed out. The same weapons are fre-

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quently employed against the servants of Christ; but let them not be, on that account, discouraged from following their Master.

9. *Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up* his *heel against me.*

"I speak not of you all," saith our Lord to his disciples; "I know whom I have chosen; but that "the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread "with me, hath lift up his heel against me:" John xviii. 18. The sufferings of the church, like those of her Redeemer, generally begin at home; her open enemies can do her no harm, until her pretended friends have delivered her into their hands: and, unnatural as it may seem, they, who have waxed fat upon her bounty, are sometimes the first to "lift up "the heel" against her.

10. *But thou, O* Lord, *be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them,* or, *and I shall requite them.*

The holy Jesus here maketh his prayer unto the Father, for the accomplishment of the promised resurrection, and foretelleth the righteous judgement that would be executed on his enemies, after their rejection of the gracious offers made them, by the apostles, in his name, notwithstanding all that they had said and done against him. Then the kingdom of God was taken from them, and their house was left unto them desolate. The hour is coming when the church shall arise to glory, and all her enemies shall be confounded.

11. *By this I know that thou favourest me, because*

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mine enemy doth not triumph over me. 12. *And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.*

The Christian, like his Master, must expect sorrow and tribulation, but he is not thereby deprived of the "favour" of heaven; his spiritual enemies, whatever trouble they may give him, yet do not "triumph" over him; he is preserved in his "integrity," and his reward will be the "vision" of God. For the exaltation, therefore, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all believers, in, by, and through him.

13. *Blessed* be *the* LORD God *of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.*

PSALM XLII.

ARGUMENT.

David, by Absalom's rebellion driven from Jerusalem to the country beyond Jordan, is there supposed to have indited this Psalm; which as it is applicable to the case of our Lord, in his state of sojourning and suffering on earth, for our sins; as also, that of the church, under persecution, or that of any member thereof, when deprived of the opportunities of public worship; so doth it, in the most beautiful and pathetic strains, describe the vicissitudes of joy and sorrow, of hope and despondency, which succeed each other in the mind of the Christian pilgrim, while, exiled from the Je-

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rusalem above, he suffereth affliction and tribulation in this valley of tears. The last is the application chiefly made in the comment, as it is the most general and useful one; the others naturally offer themselves, being coincident with, or subordinate to it.

1. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O* God.

The thirst, which the "hart" experienced, when chased, in sultry weather, over the dusty plains, is here set before us, as a representation of that ardent desire after the waters of eternal comfort, which the temptations, the cares, and the troubles of the world, produce in the believing soul. Happy they who feel this desire, and fly to the well of life, that it may be satisfied. "Blessed are they that thirst "after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matt. v. 6.

2. *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before* God?

Whoever considers what it is to "appear before "God;" to behold the glorious face of Jesus; to contemplate a beauty which never fadeth; to be enriched by a beneficence which can never be exhausted, and blessed in a love unmerited and infinite; will find abundant reason to say, again and again, "My "soul thirsteth after God;" why is the time of my banishment prolonged; when shall the days of my pilgrimage have an end; "when shall I come and "appear before God?"

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3. *My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy* God?

So long as the soul finds herself absent from him whom she loveth, sorrow is still her portion, as well in the day of worldly prosperity, as in the night of adversity. And this sorrow is greatly aggravated by the taunts of the enemy; who, because the promise is delayed, and she suffereth affliction in the mean season, ridiculeth and insulteth her faith and hope, as vain and groundless; intimating, that God hath forsaken her, and tempting her to renounce her principles.

4. *When I remember these* things, *I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holiday.*

As the royal Prophet, when driven from Jerusalem by Absalom, was melted into tears at the comparison of his destitute and forlorn situation with his former glory and happiness, when, upon some joyous festival, with all his subjects about him, he had attended the service of the tabernacle, in the city of God; so the Christian pilgrim cannot but bewail his exile from the heavenly Jerusalem, out of which sin hath driven him, and doomed him to wander, for a while, in the vale of misery. Led, by repentance and faith, to look back to the place from whence he is fallen, he sighs after the unspeakable joys of the celestial Zion; longing to keep a festival, and celebrate a jubilee in heaven; to join in the songs of angels, and bear a part in the music of hallelujahs.

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5. *Why art thou cast,* or, *bowed, down, O my soul? and* why *art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him* for *the help,* or, *salvation, of his countenance.*

The holy mourner now expostulates with his soul for suffering herself to sink into a kind of despondency, on account of her afflictions, and the insolent triumph of the adversary; and, as a sovereign cordial for melancholy, prescribes "faith" in God, which will show the morning of salvation dawning, after the night of calamity shall have run its course, a night which cannot be long, and may be very short. When the sun arises, we cannot be without light; when God turns his countenance towards us, we cannot be without "salvation."

6. *O my* GOD, *my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar,* or, *the little hill.*

The soul, although exhorted, in the last verse, to "put her trust in God," yet, considering her own infirmity, still continueth to be dejected: the Prophet, therefore, confesseth as much; and maketh his complaint to God, from whom alone he expecteth comfort: and whom he did not forget, while, far from the sanctuary, he wandered up and down in the country beyond Jordan, whither he had fled from the face of Absalom. This world is, to us, that "country beyond Jordan;" Lord, make us to "remember" thee, under all the affliction and tribulations we meet with therein, until, restored to thy Jerusalem, we shall

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praise thee in heaven, for the mercies experienced upon earth.

7. *Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.*

The Prophet describeth the troubles which successively came upon him, by the vengeance of heaven, from above, "raising up evil against him, out of "his own house" and kingdom, from beneath, according to the prediction of Nathan: 2 Sam. xii. 11. The ideas seem to be borrowed from the general deluge, or from a storm at sea, when, at the "sound" of descending "waterspouts," or torrents of rain, the depths are stirred up, and put into horrible commotion; the clouds above calling, as it were, to the waters below, and one wave encouraging and exciting another to join their forces, and overwhelm the despairing sufferer *. The whole compass of creation affordeth not, perhaps, a more just and striking image of the nature and number of those calamities which sin hath brought upon the children of Adam †.

* Thus, as the learned Merrick observes, one river, in Homer, "calls upon another," to assist in overwhelming the Grecian hero. And, in Æschylus, the fire and sea are said to "swear "together," and to give each other their "pledge of con-"federacy," against the Grecian army.

† Since this was written, I find the author of "Observations "on divers Passages of Scripture" agreeing entirely with me in the notion, that David is here describing those waterspouts, and storms at sea, which were common on the Jewish coast, as we learn from Dr. Shaw, Observations, p. 324, 1st edit. So Mr. Merrick likewise, in his Annotations.

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8. Yet *the* LORD *will command his loving kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song* shall be *with me,* and *my prayer unto the God of my life.*

The gloomy prospect begins again to brighten, by a ray of hope shooting through it; and the Prophet returneth to his rest and confidence in the mercy of God, determining, not only to give him thanks in the day of prosperity, but, as Paul and Silas afterwards did, to sing his praises at midnight, in adversity and affliction.

9. *I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* 10. As *with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where* is *thy God?*

He ventureth, notwithstanding, meekly and humbly, upon the strength of the promises, to expostulate with him, who was the "rock" of his salvation, as to his seeming destitution, while continually oppressed and insulted by the cutting reproaches of the adversary. See above, ver. 3. These might be thought to render it in some sort necessary, for God to arise, and vindicate his own honour, by the protection and deliverance of his servant. The Psalmist concludes with that exhortation to his soul, to trust in God, and to wait for his salvation, which makes the mournful chorus of this beautiful Psalm:

11. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,* who is *the health of my countenance, and my God.* See above, ver. 5.

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PSALM XLIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm seemeth to be a continuation of the former, written by David in the same circumstances, on the same subject, and closing with the same chorus.

1. *Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly*, or, *unmerciful nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.*

David, in the same situation as before, appealeth to God, against a people who had driven their sovereign from his capital, to wander like a fugitive and vagabond in the remotests parts of his dominions; against thy hypocrisy of Absalom, and the villany of Ahithophel. The son of David may be supposed to make the same appeal against the same nation, for their far more cruel, treacherous, and iniquitous usage of him, their king and their God. And the words suit the circumstances of an oppressed church, or an injured prince, of all who suffer for truth and righteousness' sake, or who groan under the tyranny of their spiritual enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

2. *For thou* art *the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* See above, Ps. xlii. 9.

3. *O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead*

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me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

The chief desire of the Christian, analogous to that of the Prophet in distress, is to be saved from sin, as well as sorrow; to be instructed in the way of righteousness, by the "light" of heavenly wisdom, shining in the face of Jesus Christ; to see the accomplishment of the promises, in him who is the "truth;" and to be "led," by this light and this truth, from the land of his pilgrimage, to the "holy "hill," and the "mansions" of the just, in the new Jerusalem.

4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy,* or, *the gladness of my joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.*

The royal Prophet, upon his restoration to his throne, was to sacrifice on the altar of his God, with the voice of thanksgiving, and to celebrate his mighty Deliverer, in a new song, upon the melodious harp. The Christian, in like manner, foresees a day coming, when sorrow and sighing shall be no more; when he and his brethren are to be "made kings "and priests;" when they are to reign with their Redeemer for ever; and upon their golden harps, tuned to an unison with those of angels, to sing his everlasting praises in the courts of the heavenly temple. Therefore,

5. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him,* who is *the health of my countenance, and my God.* See above, Ps. xlii. 5.

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NINTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XLIV.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm we hear the voice of the church, under persecution; 1—3. recounting the mercies of God vouchsafed to his servants of old time; 4—8. declaring her confidence, that she shall experience the same in her present distress, and shall at length overcome through the power of her Redeemer; for that, notwithstanding her seeming desertion and manifold sufferings, 9—16. there is still a faithful remnant, 17—22. of those who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and who cease not, 23—26. to cry unto God for mercy and deliverance.

1. *We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us,* what *works thou didst in their days, in the times of old.*

The works wrought of old, by the arm of Jehovah, for the salvation of his people, are recorded by the Spirit in the Scriptures of truth, that "through patience and comfort of those Scriptures," as the apostle expresses it, the church and people of God, whensoever oppressed and afflicted, in any age or country, "may have hope," that the same God will exert the same power in their behalf. And great is the light, great is the consolation, which the sacred

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history, when thus applied, will always afford to the troubled mind.

2. How *thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them:* how *thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.*

If the dispossession of the Canaanites, and the establishment of the house of Jacob in their land, furnished the distressed church of Israel with sufficient ground for confidence; how much force hath the argument since received, by the accomplishment of what was then typified; by the victories of the true Joshua, or Jesus, by the fall of Paganism, and the plantation of the Christian faith in its stead!

3. *For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.*

As it sufficiently appears, that the settlement of Israel in the promised land was the work of God, from the miraculous fall of Jericho; from the prolongation of the day, at the word of Joshua; from the slaughter of the enemy by hailstones from heaven, &c. &c. so was it the first thing which an Israelite was in duty bound to acknowledge, if he hoped for more mercies at the hand of God. The Christian, in like manner, begins and ends all his prayers with an humble and thankful acknowledgement of the free mercy of God in Jesus Christ; confessing, that he "got not" his title to salvation, nor should enter into the possession of it, by "his own power or merit, but by "the right hand and the arm

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"of his Redeemer, and the light of his countenance, "because he had a favour unto him."

4. *Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.*

In these words, the church sums up her argument; as if she had said, O thou, who, going forth before thy people, hast so often and so wonderfully wrought salvation of old time, I still acknowledge thee as my King, able and willing to save; O manifest yet again thy power, yet again let me experience thy mercy. Behold all things are at thy command; all events are at thy disposal. O gracious Saviour, let all work together for good, to her whom thou lovest.

5. *Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.*

The people of God, however persecuted by the power of the world, here declare, that their faith faileth not; that the adversary cannot take from them their holy confidence in God, through whom, and in whose saving name, whenever he shall think fit to hear their prayers, and to appear in their cause, they doubt not of obtaining a final victory, and celebrating a glorious triumph, over all their enemies, terrestrial and infernal. Such should be the hope of every afflicted soul.

6. *For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.* 7. *But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.* 8. *In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever:*

In spiritual, as well as temporal warfare, the ap-

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pointed means are to be used, but not "trusted "in;" man is to fight, but God giveth the victory; and to him must be ascribed the praise, and the power, and the glory; that, as it is written, "He who "glorieth, may glory in the Lord." And thus the Christian church daily singeth, after the example of her blessed and holy representative, "My soul doth "magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God "my Saviour."

9. *But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.*

The church having declared her confidence, founded on the former mercies of God vouchsafed unto her, proceedeth now to describe her pitiable state under persecution, when the protection of the Almighty seemed, for a season, to be withdrawn, so that she was no longer able to stand before her enemies.

10. *Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy; and they which hate us spoil for themselves.*

The first consequence of a victory, gained by the enemies over the friends of the church, is rapine and sacrilege; the invasion of her patrimony, and the plunder of her revenues; allured by the prospect of which, robbery hath sometimes entered into the sanctuary, under the mask of reformation.

11. *Thou hast given us like sheep* appointed *for meat; and hath scattered us among the heathen.*

The second calamity which is permitted to fall on the church, in the day of adversity, is, that her people are doomed to sudden and cruel deaths by sanguinary edicts. A third calamity is that of their being

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driven, in times of persecution, from their native country, to wander among strangers and aliens, or among those in whose communion it is judged unlawful to join.

12. *Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase* thy wealth *by their price.*

A fourth misery incidental to the people of God, when under persecution, is, that he permits them to be held cheap and vile, and to be sold into slavery by their enemies, for little or nothing; a situation far more to be dreaded than the sword of the executioner.

13. *Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.* 14. *Thou makest us a by-word among the heathen; a shaking of the head among the people.* 15. *My confusion* is *continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me:* 16. *For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.*

The fifth and last bitter fruit of persecution is, that thereby the name, and truth, and church, and people of God, are exposed to the insolent and blasphemous scoffs and jeers of infidels; nor is there any circumstance to a pious soul more grievous and afflictive than this.

17. *All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.* 18. *Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way:* 19. *Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.*

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It is certain that God is provoked, by the sins of a church, to let loose the fury of the oppressor upon her. This is acknowledged by Daniel in his prayer; ch. ix.: by the three children in the furnace; Song, ver. 5, 6.: by the Maccabean martyrs, suffering under Antiochus; 2 Macc. vii. 18.: and by Cyprian, and others, in the primitive times. It is not less certain, that no mere man can say, he is free from transgression. The verses now under consideration, are not, therefore, spoken by the whole church, but by the faithful remnant; nor do they imply an exemption from all sin, but by a steadfast perseverance in the profession of God's true religion, from which it is the aim of persecution to seduce, or to force them. The malice of the tormentors is here compared to the venom of "serpents;" and the state of a suffering church, to the gloom of "death" itself. Happy the soul, that, in the extremity of affliction, can, with humble confidence, thus make her appeal to God, as having held fast her integrity against all the efforts made to wrest it from her, and not having suffered the blasts of adverse fortune, by wearing out patience, to part her from the anchor of faith.

20. *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;* 21. *Shall not God search this out; for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.*

The consideration, that "God is greater than our "heart, and knoweth all things," 1 John iii. 20. ought to be strongly impressed on our minds at all times; but more particularly, when we are tempted by the world (as, one way or other, we all frequently

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are) to deny our Master, either by word or deed; and when we have occasion to call heaven to witness our uprightness, under such temptation.

22. *Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.*

The sufferings of the martyrs were a sufficient proof that they had not yielded to the temptations of the enemy. St. Paul, Rom. viii. 36. cites this verse as predictive of the persecutions then beginning to be raised against the Christians. All may apply it to themselves, who are in circumstances of the same nature; and persecution is generally consistent with itself, contriving, by some means or other, to be rid of those who stand in its way. It is a storm, before which all must either bend, or be broken.

23. *Awake, why sleepest thou, O* LORD? *Arise, cast us not off for ever.* 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face,* and *forgettest our affliction, and our oppression?*

There is a time, when the triumphs of the adversary, and the afflictions of the church, tempt men to think, that the eye of Providence is closed, or turned away, and that the Almighty hath ceased to remember their sad estate. But the truth is, that God only giveth his people an opportunity of feeling their own insufficiency; and waiteth till, by fervent and importunate prayer, they solicit his help. For so the holy Jesus slept, while the ship was covered with the waves; until, awakened by the cries of his disciples, he arose to their assistance, and spoke the tempest into a perfect calm.

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25. *For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*

They who are not brought into this state of humiliation by outward sufferings, should bring themselves into it by inward mortification and self-denial, by contrition and abasement, if they would put up such prayers, as the Majesty of heaven will deign to accept, and answer; if they would repeat with our church, in the spirit of the Litany, the concluding verse of this Psalm—

26. *Arise for our help, and redeem us, for thy mercies' sake.*

PSALM XLV.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, which is one of those appointed to be used on Christmas-day, the Prophet, after, 1. proposing his subject, proceeds to celebrate King Messiah, 2. for his spiritual beauty and eloquence; 3, 4, 5. his power and victories; 6. his throne and sceptre; 7. his righteousness and inauguration; 8. his royal robes, and glorious palace. 9. The church is introduced as his spouse; her appearance and dress are described; 10, 11, 12. it is foretold, that the nations shall bring their offerings to her; 13, 14, 15. her attire, her presentation to Christ, with her attendant train, and the universal joy and gladness, occasioned by the so-

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lemnization of the nuptials, are set forth. 16. The Prophet predicteth the fruits of this divine union; and, 17. the use that should be made of his sacred epithalamium by the faithful, from generation to generation.

1. *My heart is inditing,* Heb. *boileth,* or, *bubbleth up, a good matter,* or, *the good word: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue* is *the pen of a ready writer.*

"The Spirit of the Lord," saith David elsewhere, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. "spake by me, and his word was "in my tongue." In like manner, we are to conceive the Prophet here to be full of the divine Spirit, which inspired him with the "good word," or the glad tidings of salvation. The sacred fire, inclosed in his heart, expanded itself within, till at length it brake forth with impetuosity, to enlighten and to revive mankind with this glorious prediction, "touch-"ing the King," Messiah; and this was uttered by his tongue, under the guidance of the Spirit, as, in writing, the pen is directed by the hand that holds it.

2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*

After a short introduction, the Prophet stays not to enter regularly upon the subject, in the formal way of narration; but, as if he saw the Divine Person, whom he was about to celebrate, standing before him, he breaks out in ecstatic admiration of the second Adam, so different from all the descendants of

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the first! compounded of a soul fair above all created spirits, and a body pure and perfect, and now brighter than the meridian sun; being invested with the unutterable effulgence of the Divine Nature. Next to the spiritual beauty of Messiah, the Prophet is astonished (as those who heard him speak, in the days of his flesh, afterwards were) at "the gracious "words which proceeded out of his mouth," Luke iv. 22. through the "grace poured into his lips." Such honey and milk were under his tongue, so delightful and salutary was his doctrine, that even his enemies found themselves obliged to confess, "never "man spake like this man:" John vii. 46. His word instructed the ignorant, resolved the doubtful, comforted the mourners, reclaimed the wicked, silenced his adversaries, healed diseases, controlled the elements, and raised the dead. Therefore hath the Father loved, and exalted, and blessed him, for evermore.

3. *Gird thy sword upon* thy *thigh, O* most *mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*

The Prophet, having described the beauty and the eloquence of the King, proceedeth now to set forth his power, and to arm him, as a warrior, for the battle. The "sword" of Messiah is his Word, which, in the language of St. Paul, is said to be "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-"edged sword;" and is represented by St. John, as "a sharp two-edged sword," coming out of the "mouth" of Christ: Heb. iv. 12. Rev. i. 16. With this weapon he prevailed, and thereby made

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his "glory and majesty" to be known throughout the world.

4. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because,* or, *for the sake, of truth, and meekness,* and *righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible,* or, *wonderful things* *.

Messiah is in these words magnificently described, as making his progress among the nations, seated in his triumphal chariot, adorned with all the regal virtues, achieving the most astonishing victories, and, by the irresistible might of his power, subduing idolatry and iniquity, to the faith and temper of the Gospel.

5. *Thine arrows* are *sharp in the heart of the King's enemies;* whereby *the people fall under thee.*

The Prophet goes on to represent Messiah as a warrior, completely armed, and skilful in the use of every weapon. Thus a prince is portrayed, Rev. vi. 2. "I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that "sate on him had a bow, and a crown was given "unto him; and he went forth conquering, and to "conquer." The conquests of Messiah are either those of his word over sin, or those of his arm over the persecuting powers.

6. *Thy throne, O God,* is *for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom* is *a right sceptre.*

* "The sense, perhaps, may be this: Thy right hand, by its "promptness to encounter danger, shall bring thee acquainted "with terrible things: thy right hand shall know its office; by "habitual exercise, shall render thee expert in war, and lead "thee on from conquest to conquest." MERRICK.

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The battle being fought, and the victory gained, we are called to the consideration of the "throne and "sceptre" of King Messiah, whom the Prophet addresseth as God. His throne is distinguished from the thrones of this world, by its endless duration; his sceptre, from the sceptres of earthly potentates, by the unerring rectitude of its administration.

7. *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

The sermons, the example, and, above all, the death of Christ, for the expiation of sin, demonstrated his love of righteousness, and hatred of wickedness; and, "because he humbled himself, and "became obedient even to the death of the cross, "therefore God highly exalted him;" Phil. ii. 8, 9. and he was "anointed" to the kingdom, "with the "Holy Ghost and with power" immeasurable; to the intent that he might bestow, in due proportion, the gifts of heaven on those whom he is not ashamed to call "friends" and "brethren." And these gifts he did bestow on them, by the emission of the Spirit, soon after his ascension and inauguration. See the application of these last two verses to Christ, Heb. i. 8, 9.

8. *All thy garments* smell *of myrrh, and aloes,* and *cassia, out of the ivory palaces* *, *whereby they have made thee glad.*

From the throne, the sceptre, and the inauguration,

* That is, palaces adorned, or inlaid, with ivory; as "Ebur "tria vestit;" Lucan x. 119. MERRICK.

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the Prophet passes on to the robes and palaces of the King of glory, declaring, that as the perfumed garments of an earthly prince scatter through all the royal apartments a grateful fragrance, so from the glorious vestments of our High Priest and King is diffused the sweet savour of his heavenly graces, filling those happy regions of joy and gladness, where he keeps his residence above, and, by the communication of the Spirit, refreshing the faithful on earth with their odours.

9. *King's daughters* were *among thy honourable women,* or, *the splendour of thy train; upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*

Such being the divine beauty, and heavenly glory, of the blessed Person, whose nuptials the Prophet is now proceeding to describe, it is no wonder that, upon hearing of his fame, innumerable converts, forsaking the vanities even of courts and kingdoms, should follow him, ambitious to have the honour of composing his train; which in reality was the case, upon the publication of the Gospel. And, lo, at "the "right hand" of the King, followed by this magnificent procession, appears the church, the spouse of the Lamb, arrayed in the garments of righteousness and salvation, fitly compared, for their inestimable value, and radiant brightness, to the "gold of Ophir."

10. *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house:* 11. *So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he* is *thy Lord; and worship thou him.*

This seemeth to be the voice of God, addressing

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the church to the following effect—O thou whom I have begotten unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and whom I have called out of the world, to become "the Lamb's wife," hearken diligently to my voice, consider attentively what I say, and be obedient to my direction: thou art now entering into a new state; let old things pass away; regard no more thy connexions with earth; but let the love, and, if possible, the very memory, of thy former condition be obliterated from thy mind; let all things belonging to the flesh die in thee: then shalt thou be truly acceptable and dear in his sight, who, having purchased and betrothed thee to himself, justly claims thy whole heart, thy undivided love, and thy unlimited service and adoration.

12. *And the daughter of Tyre* shall be there *with a gift;* even *the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.*

The accession of the Gentiles, with their offerings and donations, to the church, is here predicted under the name of "Tyre," a city in the neighbourhood of Palestine, formerly the glory of the nations, and mart of the world. See Isa. lv. and Rev. xxi.

13. *The King's daughter* is *all glorious within: her clothing* is *of wrought gold.*

The church, in different respects, is sometimes called the spouse, sometimes the sister, and often, as here, the "daughter" of the heavenly King; the connexion formed between them, uniting in itself every relation, and every affection. Her beauty, so greatly desired and delighted in by Messiah, is spiritual;

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it is the beauty of holiness; and her clothing is "the "righteousness of saints." 1 Pet. iii. 3. Rev. xix. 8.

14. *She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work, or, embroidery: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.*

The different graces of the faithful, all wrought in them by the same Spirit, compose that divine "embroidery" which adorns the wedding garment of the church, who is therein presented to the King, attended by her bride-maids, after the nuptial manner. These are either the single churches, or holy souls, that accede to and accompany the spouse; unless we suppose, as some do, that the bride is the Israelitish church, and then the attendants will represent the Gentiles.

15. *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace.*

The solemnization of this marriage between Christ and the church, produceth a jubilee upon earth, and causeth the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem to resound with hallelujahs. For this the angels tune their golden harps, while prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, fill up the universal chorus of "Blessing, "and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him "that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, "for ever and ever."

16. *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*

In this verse the Prophet foretelleth the fruit that should spring from the glorious nuptials which he hath been celebrating. He assureth the spouse, that

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instead of her earthly kindred, whether Jewish or Pagan, which she was to leave for Christ, should arise an illustrious and royal progeny of believers, out of whom were to be chosen Christian kings to govern the world, and Christian bishops to preside in the church. The expression, "whom thou mayest "make princes" may answer to that in the Revelation, ch. i. ver. 6. "And hath made us kings and "priests unto God and his Father." So Mr. Merrick thinks, who beautifully turns the passage, in his poetical version, as follows—

> No more the Patriarchs of thy line
> In time's long records chief shall shine;
> Thy greater Sons, to empire born,
> Its future annals shall adorn,
> Thy pow'r deriv'd to them display,
> And stretch through earth their boundless sway.

17. *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*

By inditing this divine marriage-song, appointed to be sung in the congregation of the faithful from age to age, the Psalmist hath been, as he foresaw he should be, the blessed means of celebrating his Redeemer's name, and inciting the nations of the world to do likewise; nor will he cease to be so, while the xlvth Psalm continues to be sung in the church upon earth; that is, while there remaineth a church upon earth to sing in. And we, who now do sing it, are witnesses of these things.

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PSALM XLVI.

ARGUMENT.

The church, in time of trouble, declares, 1. her trust and confidence to be in God, and doubts not, 2, 3. of being preserved safe, by means of this anchor, in the most stormy seasons; even then, 4, 5. enjoying the comforts of the Spirit, and the presence of Christ in the midst of her. She describes, 6. and, 7. exults in, the power and might of her victorious Lord; 8, 9. calling the world to view and consider his wonderful works, 10. He himself is introduced, as speaking the nations into peace and obedience. She concludes with a repetition of ver. 7. in the way of chorus.

1. *God* is *our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

As we are continually beset by "troubles," either bodily or spiritual, so we continually stand in need of a city of "refuge and strength," into which we may fly, and be safe. Religion is that city, whose gates are always open to the afflicted soul. We profess to believe this; do we act agreeably to such profession?

2. *Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;* 3. Though *the waters thereof roar* and *be troubled,* though *the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.*

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The church declares her full and firm confidence in God, as her refuge and strength, amidst all the tumults and confusions of the world, the raging of nations, and the fall of empires. Nay, at that last great and terrible day, when sea and land are to be confounded, and every mountain and hill removed for ever; when there is to be "distress of nations, "with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;" even then, the righteous shall have no cause to "fear," but rather to "lift up their heads" with joy and triumph, because then it is, that their "redemp-"tion draweth nigh." Let us set that day before us, and try ourselves by that test.

4. There is *a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God: the holy* place *of the tabernacle of the Most High.* 5. *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her*, and that *right early*; Heb. *when the morning appeareth.*

Such is the ground, on which the church erects her confidence. Instead of those waters which overwhelm the world, she has within herself the fountain of consolation, sending forth rivers of spiritual joy and pleasure; and, in the place of secular instability, she is possessed of a city and a hill which stand fast for ever, being the residence of the Eternal, who, at the dawn of the last morning, will finally appear as the protector and avenger of Israel.

6. *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

How concise, how energetic, how truly and astonishingly sublime! The kingdom of Christ being

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twofold, these words may be applied either to the overthrow of Heathenism, and the establishment of the Gospel; or to the destruction of the world, and the erection of Messiah's triumphant throne. Conquer, O Lord, all our perverse affections, and reign in us, that we may conquer, and reign with thee.

7. *The* LORD *of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge;* Heb. *an high place for us.*

To the "LORD of hosts" all creatures in heaven and earth are subject; in "the God of Jacob," the church acknowledges the Saviour of his chosen. If this person be IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US, of whom can we be afraid?

8. *Come, behold the works of the* LORD, *what desolations he hath made in the earth.* 9. *He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.*

The church, in these words, proposes to us the noblest subjects for contemplation; namely, the glorious victories of our Lord, partly gained already, and partly to be gained hereafter, in order to the final establishment of universal peace, righteousness, and bliss, in his heavenly kingdom. Then the mighty shall be fallen, and the weapons of war perished, for ever. Hasten, O Lord, that blessed day; but first prepare us for it.

10. *Be still, and know that I* am *God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

In this verse there is a change of person, and Jehovah himself is introduced, as commanding the

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world to cease its opposition, to own his power, and to acknowledge his sovereignty over all the kingdoms of the nations. Let our rebellious passions hear this divine edict,—tremble, and obey.

11. *The* LORD *of hosts* is *with us; the God of Jacob* is *our refuge*. See ver. 7.

NINTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XLVII.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, appointed by the church to be used on Ascension-day, the Prophet, 1. calls the nations to celebrate so glorious a festival; and that on account, 2. of Christ's power, and the mightiness of his kingdom; 3. of his victories and triumphs, through the Gospel; 4. of the inheritance prepared for his chosen, in the heavenly Canaan, by his own ascension thither; which, 5. is described under the images borrowed from the ascent of the ark into the holy city and temple; an occasion, on which the Psalm was probably composed. 6, 7. He again and again exhorts all people to sing the praises of their God and King, and to sing with the understanding, as well as with the voice. 8, 9. The Psalm concludes with predicting the establishment of Christ's kingdom,

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and the conversion of the Gentile kings and nations to the faith.

1. *O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.*

The Prophet invites all nations to celebrate the festival of Messiah's exaltation, because all nations had a share in the benefits and blessings of that glorious day. God is to be worshipped with bodily, as well as spiritual worship: every "hand" should be lifted up to him who formed it, and every "mouth" should praise him who giveth breath for that purpose.

2. *For the* LORD *most high* is *terrible;* he is *a great King over all the earth.*

The church celebrates the ascension of Christ, because then he was "highly exalted;" then he became "terrible" to his enemies, all power in heaven and in earth being committed to him; and then he began to display the excellent majesty of his universal kingdom, to which he was then inaugurated, being crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

3. *He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.*

The consequence of our Lord's ascension was the going forth of the all-subduing Word, under the influence and direction of which, the convinced and converted nations renounced their idols and their lusts, and bowed their willing necks to the yoke of Jesus. This is that great conquest, foreshowed by the victories of Joshua, David, and all the faithful heroes of old time, and foretold in language borrowed from their histories.

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4. *He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.*

The land of Canaan, emphatically styled "that "good land, and the glory of all lands," was the "excellent inheritance" chosen for the sons of Jacob, and consigned to them, upon the expulsion of the idolatrous nations. But from that inheritance Israel also hath long since been expelled; and Christians, by these words, are taught to look to "an inhe-"ritance eternal, and incorruptible, and that fadeth "not away;" to those happy and enduring mansions which the Son of God is gone to prepare for them that love him, and are beloved of him.

5. *God is gone up with a shout, the* LORD *with the sound of a trumpet.*

Literally, if applied to the ark, as bishop Patrick paraphrases the verse, "God is gone up, by the spe-"cial token of his presence, into that holy place, "with shouts of joy and praise; the LORD is gone "up in a triumphant pomp, with the sound of the "trumpet, and all other instruments of music." See 2 Sam. vi. 5. 15. 2 Chron. v. 2. 12, &c. Ps. cxxxii. 8, 9. But spiritually, as applied now by the Christian church, to the ascension of Christ into heaven, prefigured by that of the ark into the temple—God incarnate is gone up into that holy place, not made with hands; the everlasting doors of heaven are opened, for the King of glory to enter, and re-possess his ancient throne; there he is received by the united acclamations of the celestial armies, by that "shout," that voice of the archangel, and that "trump of "God," which are to sound again, in the day when

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he shall "so come, in like manner, as he went into "heaven*."

6. Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. 7. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

Who can contemplate the glorious triumph of human nature over its enemies, in the person of our King, risen and ascended, without finding himself constrained to break forth into joy, and to sing, with a thankful heart, and an elevated voice, the praises due unto his holy name! These divine hymns were designed for that purpose. Let us therefore sing them, and let us sing them "with understanding;" considering by whom they were indited, and of whom they treat; reflecting, that the eternal Spirit is their author, and their subject the blessed Jesus.

8. God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

We are never suffered to forget, that the end of Messiah's exaltation to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, was the conversion and salvation of the world; so continually do the prophets and apostles delight to dwell upon that most interesting topic, the conversion of the "nations" to the Gospel of Christ. Why do we vainly fancy, that we belong to Him, unless his Spirit "reign" in our hearts by faith?

9. The princes of the people are gathered together,

* "Ascendit Deus"—Ascendit arca in Jerusalem cum cantu. Propheticè, Ascendit Christus in cœlum. BOSSUET.

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even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

This verse plainly describeth the kings of the Gentiles as acceding to the church; as becoming, with their subjects, through faith, "the people of the God "of Abraham," and a part of the sacred peculium; as submitting to God in Christ that power with which they were invested, as "shields of the earth," or protectors of their several kingdoms; and as bowing their sceptres to the cross of Jesus *. The sense of the verse, expressed in New Testament language, would be, "the kingdoms of this world "are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his "Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." So let every nation be converted unto thee, O Lord! and every king become thy son and servant; until all the world shall worship thee, sing of thee, and praise thy name!

PSALM XLVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is one of those which by our church are appointed to be used on Whitsunday, because

* This latter part of the verse is differently explained by the Rev. Mr. Merrick, in his poetical paraphrase of this psalm—

For he, whose hands, amid the skies,
Th' eternal sceptre wield,
To earth's whole race his care applies,
And o'er them spreads his shield.

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under images taken from the earthly city Jerusalem, newly rescued from her enemies by him who resided in the material temple on mount Zion, are celebrated, 1, 2, 3. the glory, the beauty, and the strength of the church Christian, that city and temple of Messiah; who, 4—7. is described as breaking in pieces, and bringing to nothing, the opposition formed against her by the Heathen kings and emperors; on which account, 8—11. she expresseth her gratitude and joy; 12—14. exhorteth her people to contemplate, and transmit to posterity, an account of those wonderful works of God, the establishment and preservation of his church in the world; for which she wishes all generations, after her example, to adore and praise his holy name, for ever and ever.

1. *Great* is *the* LORD, *and greatly to be praised in the city of our God,* in *the mountain of his holiness.*

The Prophet preparing to celebrate the beauty and magnificence of the church, begins with setting forth the praises of her great Founder; whose wisdom, mercy, and power, as they are conspicuous in all his works, so, more especially, in this, the chief and crown of all; for which, his name can never be sufficiently extolled, by the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem; and by them it ought to be extolled, for ever and ever.

2. *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole*

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earth is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

How "beautiful" is the holy and heavenly Zion, or the Christian church; how truly is she "the joy "of the whole earth," by the glad tidings which her ministers continually publish; how properly is this Jerusalem styled, "the city of the great King!"

3. *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*

The great Founder of the church is also her protector and defender; the dependence of the new Jerusalem, like that of the old, is not in man, or in the arm of flesh, but in the God who resideth in the midst of her. For, surely, unless he kept the holy city, the watchmen in the towers would wake but in vain.

4. *For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.*

Never were the power and malice of earthly princes more violently bent to hinder the building of Jerusalem, or to pull down what was already built, than they were to prevent the edification of the church, and to root up its foundations. But the event, with regard to the latter, was the same which had often happened, in the case of the former.

5. *They saw* it, and *so they marvelled; they were troubled,* and *hasted away.* 6. *Fear took hold upon them there,* and *pain, as of a woman in travail.*

The potentates of the world saw the miracles of the apostles, the courage and constancy of the martyrs, and the daily increase of the church, notwithstanding all their persecutions; they beheld with astonishment the rapid progress of the faith through

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the Roman empire; they called upon their gods, but their gods could not help themselves; idolatry expired at the foot of the victorious cross, and the power which supported it became CHRISTIAN.

7. *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with the east wind.*

In the foregoing verse, the consternation amongst the enemies of the church was compared to the horrors of a travailing woman; here it is likened to the apprehensions of despairing mariners. Nor indeed can any thing in nature more fitly represent the overthrow of Heathenism by the Spirit of the Gospel, than the wreck of a fleet of ships in a storm at sea. Both are effected by the mighty power of God *.

8. *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the* LORD *of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever.*

The church heard, by the prophets, of the future birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Messiah; of the effusion of the Spirit, and her own enlargement, establishment, and preservation, in the Gentile world. These predictions, which she had so often "heard," she hath "seen" accomplished, even

* Samus est; qualis ventus vehemens conterit naves magni maris, talis est Dei vis tuentis Jerusalem, et hostilem exercitum dissipantis. BOSSUET. Illustrations of this kind are sometimes introduced, by the sacred writers, with the mark of comparison; and frequently, as here, without it. The meaning evidently is, that as the east wind shatters in pieces the ships of Tarshish, so the divine power struck the Heathen kings with terror and astonishment.

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unto this day*; and therefore doubts not of God's continuing his favour and protection to the end of time.

9. *We have thought*, or, *we wait in silence and patience for thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.*

Contemplation of all the wondrous works which the Lord our God hath wrought for us, produces faith in his promises, and resignation to his will: and he that, with these dispositions, waits for God's mercies, in God's house, shall not wait in vain.

10. *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.*

Wherever the name of God is known, and his works are declared, there the sacrifice of praise must needs be offered to him, by men, who are made sensible of his mercies towards them: and the day is coming, when all the world shall be forced to acknowledge, that his "right hand is full of righteousness," and his judgements are just.

11. *Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgements.*

* "Sicut audivimus."—Prophetia Isaiæ videtur hic notari; sensusque est: sicut audivimus ab Isaia prophetatum, fore ut obsidio mirabiliter solveretur, ac Sennacherabi dux Rabsaces, ejusque exercitus cæderetur, sic impletum vidimus. Isa. xxxvii. 21. 2 Reg. xix. 20. Quâ figurâ cœlestis Jerusalem incolæ et ipsi canunt, "sicut audivimus," ex auditu fidei, Gal. iii. 25. "sic vidimus," jam sublato velo, atque apertâ Dei facie. "Deus fundavit eam:" nihil habet metuendum, tanto exempta periculo. Prophetice, de Ecclesiâ fundatâ super petram, ideoque inconcussâ. Matt. xvi. 18. BOSSUET.

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The church, and all her children, are exhorted to rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, on account of the manifestation of divine power, on her behalf, against her enemies. Thus, at the fall of the mystic Babylon, it is said—"Rejoice over her, "thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, "for God hath avenged you on her." Rev. xviii. 20.

12. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof.* 13. *Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following.*

Christians are here enjoined to contemplate, again and again, continually, the fabric of the spiritual Jerusalem, wonderfully raised, and as wonderfully preserved; to consider attentively the parts designed for use, for strength, for ornament; that they may be able to instruct posterity in the nature and history of this holy building, and in their duty of forwarding and defending the same, from generation to generation.

14. *For this God* is *our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide* even *unto death.*

Let the world worship whom or what it will, WE worship none other but Him who, by his Spirit, founded, and, by his power, preserveth the church; who, by that Spirit, "guideth" us through life, and, by that power, will enable us to overcome "death *;" that so we may rejoice and triumph for evermore, as

* "This God will be our God to all eternity, and (by that "power which he has already exerted in our protection) will "conduct us through life with safety." MERRICK.

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citizens of the city of God, and subjects of the King of glory.

PSALM XLIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Prophet, after a solemn introduction, 1—4. in which the whole world is called upon, to hear a lesson of divine wisdom, 5. proposes the subject in a question, implying the great folly of yielding to the temptation of fear, in the time of affliction and persecution, when the rich and the powerful are in arms against the innocent and righteous sufferer; inasmuch as, 5—9. no man, by his riches or power, can redeem his brother, or himself, in the evil day; but, 10. wise and foolish die, and leave their estates to others; and, 11—13. notwithstanding all their care and pains, are soon forgotten, while they are detained, by death, in the grave, till they rise to judgement and condemnation. On the other hand, the Prophet, in the person of Messiah, 15. declares his faith in a joyful resurrection to life and glory, through the power of Jehovah; and, 16—20. exhorts believers, neither to fear nor envy the man of the world, considering what his latter end is to be.

1. *Hear this, all* ye *people: give ear, all* ye *in-*

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habitants of the world: 2. Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

This Psalm opens with great dignity, and the Prophet speaks "as one having authority." He demands an audience, like that which is to be assembled at the last day; having something to deliver, which is universally important and interesting; something which concerns every age, and condition, and nation, under heaven. And we may observe, that although the sound of this Psalm, when first uttered, could be heard only within the confines of Judea, yet the knowledge of it hath since actually been diffused in the Christian church, throughout the world, from the rising to the setting sun. But how few, alas! have duly attended to the salutary lesson, which it so divinely teacheth.

3. *My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart* shall be *of understanding.*

At the call of folly, what multitudes are always ready to assemble! But Wisdom, eternal and essential Wisdom, crieth without; she lifteth up her voice in the streets; and who is at leisure to attend her heavenly lectures? The "mouth" of Jesus always "spake of wisdom?" but few regarded him: the "meditation of his heart" was ever "of understand-"ing;" but it was accounted madness.

4. *I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*

In the promulgation of wisdom and understanding to the world, the Prophet, as the faithful scribe of the Spirit, was to speak only what he should hear, by "inclining his ear" to his divine Teacher; he was to

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speak in the way of "parable," or proverb, or problem, that is, in such a way, as should require study and diligence, to unfold and explain; in such a way, as the world is not inclined to understand, or listen to; as our Lord delivered his doctrines when on earth. And, that melody might serve as a vehicle for instruction, this important lesson was to be set to music, and played upon the harp.

5. *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*

"The iniquity of my heels," says bishop Lowth, is hardly sense. Suppose עקבי to be, not a noun, but the present participle of the verb; it will then be "The wickedness of those that lie in wait for "me," or "endeavour to supplant me." Bishop Hare likewise, as Mr. Merrick has observed, translates עקבי, "insidiantium mihi." I had, at first, given another turn to the Psalmist's question, and by "the "iniquity of my heels," had understood to be meant, "the iniquity of my footsteps," that is, "my goings," or "ways;" (עקבי being used for footsteps, Ps. lvi. 7. and Cant. i. 8.) as if it had been said—Why, for the sake of procuring riches or power, should I bring fear and anguish upon myself, in that hour, when my sins will find me out, and neither riches, nor power, can deliver me from the punishment due to them? Thus Bossuet and Mudge understood the verse. But I am clear, that bishop Lowth's idea is the true one; and then the purport of the question is plainly this—Why should I give way to fear and despondency, in the time of calamity, when the

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wickedness of my wealthy and powerful adversaries compasseth me about, to supplant and overthrow me?

6. *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;* 7. *None* of them *can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:* 8. *(For the redemption of their soul* is *precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)* 9. *That he should still live for ever,* and *not see corruption.*

In this world, as the wise man observeth, Eccles. x. 19. "money answereth all things;" and therefore worldly men place their trust and confidence in it; but, in "the evil day," riches shall not be found; nor, if they could be found, would they avail any thing towards eternal salvation. For, "what shall "a man give in exchange for his soul?" saith one, who best knew the value of souls; as he paid the price of that "precious redemption," which otherwise must have "ceased for ever;" when he suffered for us on the cross, and arose, on the third day, to life and immortality, without "seeing corruption*."

10. *For he seeth* that *wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*

The inability of man to save his brother or himself from death, is evinced by daily experience, which

* Hos versus ad Christum patres referunt, ut sensus sit, nemo purus homo fratrem redimit, sed tantum ille homo qui etiam Deus est. Memorant etiam interpretes R. Mosen Hazarden, qui verba hæc de Rege Messiâ intelligit, qui pro redemptione fratrum mortuus, postea in æternum vivat, uti prædictum est ab Isaiâ, liii. 10. BOSSUET.

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showeth us, that the penalty due to sin is continually levied upon all: wisdom and folly go down into the dust together; "and then, whose shall those things "be, which have been provided?" Luke xii. 20. Their possessions come into the hands of others, perhaps of those for whom they never intended them, and who have neither inclination nor ability to do the dead man any service.

11. *Their inward thought* is, that *their houses* shall continue *for ever*, and *their dwelling-places to all generations; they call* their *lands after their own names.*

Various are the contrivances of vain men, to have their names written on earth, and to procure, after their deaths, an imaginary immortality, for themselves and their families, in the memory and conversation of posterity; which is not often obtained; and, if obtained, is of no value; when, with less trouble, they might have had their names written in heaven, and have secured to themselves a blessed immortality, in the glorious kingdom of their Redeemer.

12. *Nevertheless man* being *in honour abideth not; he is like the beasts* that *perish.*

The continuance of man in the world is as that of a traveller at an inn, who tarrieth but for a night; so that if honour and wealth do not soon leave him, he must soon leave them, and, like the brutes around him, return to his earth, never more to be seen, and little more to be thought of*. Families decay, and

* "Comparatus est jumentis;" quoad temporalia, nihil habet amplius, atque omnino instar jumenti est, nisi æterna meditatur. BOSSUET.

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are extinguished, as well as individuals; and the world itself is to perish after the same example. That such beings, in such a place, should think of becoming glorious and immortal!

13. *This their way* is *their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings.*

The practice of labouring to acquire wealth and greatness, which can be of no service after death, and of endeavouring to perpetuate the possession of the most uncertain things in nature, is doubtless a folly; but it is a folly which, like many others, is at once blamed, and imitated.

14. *Like sheep that,* or, *they, are laid in the grave, death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.*

The high and mighty ones of the earth, who cause people to fear and nations to tremble around them, must one day crowd the grave; in multitude and impotence, though not in innocence, resembling sheep, driven and confined, by the butcher, in his house of slaughter. There death, that ravening wolf, shall feed sweetly on them, and devour his long-expected prey, in silence and darkness, until the glorious morning of the resurrection dawn; when the once oppressed and afflicted righteous, risen from the dead, and sitting, with their Lord, in judgement, shall have the dominion over their cruel and insulting enemies; whose faded beauty, withered strength, and departed glory, shall display to men and angels the vanity of that confidence which is not placed in God

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15. *But God will redeem my soul*, or, *animal frame, from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me.*

The righteous, as well as the wicked, descend into the grave: to the bodies of the former it is a resting place, as the prison was to St. Peter, till the angel of the Lord shall awaken them, and call them forth; while to the latter it is a condemned hold, from which, at the appointed day, they are to be dragged to execution *. The Prophet here expresseth a full and firm faith in the resurrection; and may be conceived as speaking in the person of Him who was first redeemed from the grave, and accepted by the Father; who did not "despond in the days of evil, and when "the wickedness of his supplanters compassed him "about;" as foreseeing their speedy destruction, and his own approaching resurrection and exaltation. And therefore, he thus exhorts each disciple of his in the subsequent verses of our Psalm:—

16. *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich; when the glory of his house is increased.* 17. *For when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.*

This is the conclusion of the Psalm, naturally following from the premises; and addressed, by way of exhortation and comfort, to the meek and humble disciples of the Lamb; directing them to fear God,

* Impiorum inanitate despectâ, assurgit ad bonos in Deum sperantes, quorum Deus animam ab inferis redimit, cùm a sepulchro assumptos ad vitam æternam transfert. Alioqui, neque qui sperat in Domino plus reliquis haberet, neque præfationi responderet hujus Psalmi doctrina. BOSSUET.

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who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell, and not to be afraid of the short-lived power, conferred in this world, by wealth, over the body only. For this purpose, nothing is requisite, but to strip the worldling of the pomp and parade, the connexions and relations of life, and to consider him, as he is to appear on the day of his burial, when nothing shall attend him, but his shroud, to the grave, and his works to the judgement-seat. View him in this light, which is the proper light to view him in, and he will cease to be the object of fear or envy.

18. *Though, while he lived, he blessed his soul; and* men *will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself.*

Such must be the worldling's end, as described above; however, in the day of health and prosperity, he may bless himself, and say, "Soul, thou hast "goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, "drink, and be merry." Nor will such a speech, whenever it is spoken, want its admirers: it will have the applause of numbers, whose opinion it is, that "there is nothing better for a man, than that he "should eat, and drink, and enjoy himself, al the "days of his life, which God giveth him under the "sun."

19. *He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.*

They who follow their fathers in sin, must follow them likewise into the torments of that sad place where darkness has fixed its everlasting abode, for the reception of those that ever loved and embraced it; and where the light of life and salvation no

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longer visits those, who always hated, and rejected it.

20. *Man,* that is *in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts* that *perish.*

The sum of the whole matter is, that it can profit a man nothing to gain the whole world; to become possessed of all its wealth, and all its power; if, after all, he lose his own soul, and be cast away, for want of that holy and heavenly wisdom which distinguishes him from the brutes, and sets him above them, in his life, and at his death.

TENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM L.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm presents us with a magnificent description, 1, 2. of the promulgation of the Gospel, followed, 3, 4. by a prediction of the terrible manner of God's coming to judge his apostate people, Israel *; 5, 6. of the assembly to be present, and

* Such is the general idea entertained of this Psalm, by the best Christian expositors, cited in Poole's Synopsis, where we are likewise informed, that the Jewish rabbies affirm the subject of it to be, "that judgement, which will be executed in "the days of Messiah"—ignorant, alas! that they themselves, and their people, are now become the unhappy objects of that judgement.—"Psalmi quinquagesimi argumentum est ex ge-"nere didactico ad moralem theologiam pertinens, grave im-"primis et fructuosum: Deo nimirum non placere sacrificia "et externos ritus religionis, sed sinceram potius pietatem, lau-"desque ex grato animo profluentes; neque vero has ipsas pie-

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his appeal to men and angels; 7—13. the rejection of the legal, and, 14, 15. the establishment of the Christian worship and services; 16—20. the impenitent Jews are arraigned, and 21. threatened; and, 22. exhorted to consider, to repent; and, 23. to embrace the evangelical, or spiritual religion. It is to be observed, that in this Psalm, as in our Lord's discourse on the same subject, the particular judgement of Jerusalem is a figure and specimen of the last general judgement. Hypocritical and wicked Christians are, therefore, to apply to themselves what is primarily addressed to their elder brethren, the unbelieving and rebellious sons of faithful and obedient Abraham.

1. *The mighty God,* even *the* LORD, *hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof.*

"tatis significationes, sine justitia cæterisque virtutibus. Ita "duas habet partes; primo arguitur cultor pius quidem, sed "ignarus et superstitioni obnoxius; deinde improbus pietatis "simulator. Si totum hujusce odæ apparatum et quasi scenam "contemplamur, nihil facile potest esse magnificentius. Deus "universum genus humanum solenni edicto convocat, ut de "populo suo judicium publice exerceat; ponitur in Sione au-"gustum tribunal: depingitur Dei advenientis majestas ima-"ginibus a descensu in montem Sinam petitis: cœlum et terra "invocantur divinæ justitiæ testes: tum demum inducitur Dei "ipsius sententiam dicentis augustissima persona, per reliquam "oden continuata; unde cum cæteris ejus partibus admirabilis "illa exordii majestas et splendor communicatur." LOWTH, Prælect. xxvii. ad init.

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"God, who at sundry times, and in divers man-
"ners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the
"prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us
"by his Son:" Heb. i. 1. The everlasting Gospel hath made its glorious progress from the eastern to the western world; and the nations have been thereby called to repentance.

2. *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*

The law which was given by Moses, proceeded from Sinai, the mount of fear and horror; but the word of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ, issued forth from Sion, the chosen mountain of beauty and excellency, in Jerusalem. There that glory first arose and shone, which, like the light of heaven, soon diffused itself abroad over the face of the whole earth.

3. *Our God shall come and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*

The Prophet, having described the first advent of Christ, and the promulgation of the Gospel, now foretelleth his coming to take vengeance on the hypocritical Jews, as also, his advent to judge the world, prefigured thereby. Upon both those occasions, his coming was to be with sounds and sights of terror, with all the marks and tokens of wrath and fiery indignation, like those displayed on Sinai.

4. *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that he may judge his people.*

Heaven and earth, men and angels, were to be witnesses of the righteous judgements of God, exe-

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cuted upon his apostate people; as all the celestial armies, and all the generations of the sons of Adam, are to be present, at the general judgement of the last day.

5. *Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*

These are the words of God, summoning mankind to attend the trial, "calling to the heavens from "above, and to the earth, that he may judge his peo-"ple." Thus it is said of the Son of man, Matt. xxiv. 31. "He shall send his angels with a great "sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together "his elect from the four winds, from one end of "heaven to the other."

6. *And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself.*

> Th' applauding heav'ns the changeless doom,
> While God the balance shall assume,
> In full memorial shall record,
> And own the justice of their Lord.
>
> MERRICK.

7. *Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I* am *God,* even *thy God.*

This is the voice of the omniscient Judge, impleading his ancient people, who are commanded to attend to the words of him, their God and covenanted Saviour, thus constrained to clear his justice before the world, and to show that they had destroyed themselves. Nominal and wicked Christians will be addressed in the same manner at the last day.

8. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy*

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burnt-offerings, to have been, or, *they were continually before me.*

This judicial process was not commenced against Israel, for their having neglected to offer the sacrifices of the law; their oblations were on the altar, morning and evening, continually, insomuch that God, by the Prophet Isaiah, declares himself "weary "of them," as not having been accompanied with faith and holiness in the offerer. Many pharisaical Christians will be condemned for the same reason, notwithstanding their strict and scrupulous attendance upon the ordinances of the new law, if it shall appear that they left religion in the church behind them, instead of carrying it with them into their lives and conversations.

9. *I will take no bullock out of thine house,* nor *he-goat out of thy folds.* 10. *For every beast of the forest* is *mine,* and *the cattle upon a thousand hills.* 11. *I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field* are *mine.* 12. *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world* is *mine, and the fulness thereof.*

The Jewish folly of doating on the legal offerings, as things in themselves acceptable to God, and conferring justification on man, is reproved in these verses, from the consideration, that the various animals slain in sacrifice, were long before, even from the creation of the world, the sole right and property of JEHOVAH; which, therefore, he needed not to have required at the hands of his people; nor would he have done so, but for some farther end and intent, signified and represented by such oblations. What

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that end and intent was, Christians know; and Jews formerly did know. Learn we hence, not to dream of any merit in our works and services; since God hath a double claim, founded on creation and redemption, to all we have, and all we are.

13. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*

Another argument of the Jews' blindness is, the gross absurdity of imagining, that a spiritual and holy being could possibly be satisfied and pleased with the taste and smell of burnt-offerings (which God often declareth himself to have been,) any otherwise, than as they were symbolical of some other sacrifice, spiritual and holy, and, therefore, really propitiatory and acceptable in his sight. That man judaizeth, who thinketh to please God by an external, without an internal service; or by any service, without Christ.

14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:* 15. *And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

The carnal and bloody sacrifices of the law being abolished by the coming of Messiah, the spiritual and unbloody oblations of the Gospel succeed in their stead. These are, the eucharistic sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for the mercies of redemption; that hearty repentance, that faith unfeigned, and that obedience evangelical, promised and vowed in baptism: that perfect trust in God, and resignation to his will, which our Lord expressed in his prayer, during his sufferings, and which we ought to ex-

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press in our prayers, when called to suffer with him, if we desire to glorify God for our deliverance through him, in the day of visitation. These are the services enjoined to such Jews as would become Christians, and to such Christians, as would be Christians in deed and in truth.

16. *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or* that *thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth:* 17. *Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee?*

From hence, to the end of the Psalm, we have an expostulation of God with the unbelieving Jew, who boasted his relation to Abraham, without a spark of Abraham's faith in his heart; and gloried in a law, which condemned him as a breaker of its precepts in every instance. St. Paul's expostulation with the same person, Rom. ii. 17. &c. is so exact a parallel to this before us, that one will be the best comment upon the other—"Behold, thou art called a Jew, "and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of "God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things "that are more excellent, being instructed out of the "law; and art confident that thou thyself art a "guide of the blind, a light of them which are in "darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of "babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of "the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, that makest "thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dis-"honourest thou God?" Every minister of God should try and examine himself by these passages in our Psalm and St. Paul, on the former of which the famous Origen is once said to have preached, making

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application to his own case, not without many tears. And, indeed, "if thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, who," among us all, "shall stand? But "there is forgiveness with thee:" Ps. cxxx. 3, 4.

18. *When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.*

St. Paul proceeds in the very same manner—"Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, "dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should "not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? "Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" All Christians, the clergy especially, should beware not only of committing evil themselves, but of "consenting" to, or "partaking" of, the evil committed by others.

19. *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.* 20. *Thou sittest* and *speakest against thy brother: thou slanderest thine own mother's son.*

Had St. Paul thought proper to have gone on to this instance, he might have said—"Thou that "teachest a man should not bear false witness, dost "thou bear false witness?" For certainly never men brake that commandment in a more flagrant manner than the Jews: never men "gave" their "mouth" more "to evil," or "framed" more "deceit," than they, when they "sat and spake against their brethren," and "slandered their own mother's children," for believing in Jesus Christ. Let us look at this picture of slander, and we shall never fall in love with so detestable a vice.

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21. *These* things *hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether* such an one *as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set* them *in order before thine eyes.*

The forbearance of God only tempted the Jews still to think him on their side, till at length he made the Roman armies his instruments of conviction; who, by crucifying multitudes of their countrymen in sight of the besieged, did in a wonderful manner "reprove them, and set before them the things which "they had done." The day of judgement will do this to all sinners, if temporal chastisements effect it not, before that day shall come.

22. *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear* you *in pieces, and* there be *none to deliver.*

The stupendous desolation of Jerusalem, for rejecting so kind an admonition of her Saviour, and suffering him to weep over her in vain, should, in a most powerful manner, enforce that admonition on the inhabitants of Christendom, to prevent its falling, after the same example of unbelief.

23. *Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth* his *conversation* aright, *will I show the salvation of God.*

This verse resumes and repeats the conclusion intended by the whole Psalm, concerning the Jewish and the Christian worship; and St. Paul, in the place above cited, affords us a complete comment upon it: "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; nor is "that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: "but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and cir-"cumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and

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"not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but "of God."

PSALM LI.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm, composed upon a sad occasion, but too well known, we have a perfect model of penitential devotion. The royal supplicant, robed in sackcloth, and crowned with ashes, entreats for mercy, 1, 2. from a consideration of his own misery, and of the divine goodness; 3. from that of his confession; 4. of God's sole right to judge him; 5. laments the corruption of his nature; but, 6. without pleading it as an excuse; 7. prays for Gospel remission, in legal terms; 8. for spiritual joy and comfort; 9, 10. for pardoning and cleansing grace; 11, 12. for strength and perseverance, that he may, 13. instruct and convert others; 14, 15. deprecates the vengeance due to blood; 16, 17. beseeches God to accept an evangelical sacrifice; and 18, 19. concludes with a prayer for the church.

1. *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.*

The penitent's first ground for hope of pardon, is his own misery, and the divine mercy, which rejoiceth

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to relieve that misery. The riches, the power, and the glory of a kingdom, can neither prevent nor remove the torment of sin, which puts the monarch and the beggar upon a level. Every transgression leaves behind it a guilt, and a stain; the account between God and the sinner is crossed by the blood of the great propitiatory sacrifice, which removes the former; and the soul is cleansed by the Holy Spirit, which takes out the latter.

2. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

The soul that is sensible of her pollution, fears she can never be sufficiently purified from it; and therefore prays, yet again and again, continually, for more abundant grace, to make and to keep her holy.

3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin* is *ever before me.*

The penitent's second plea for mercy is, that he doth not deny, excuse, or palliate his fault, but confesses it openly and honestly, with all its aggravations, truly alleging, that it haunts him night and day, causing his conscience incessantly to reproach him with his base ingratitude to a good and gracious Father.

4. *Against,* or, *to, thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done* this *evil in thy sight; that thou mightest,* or, *therefore thou wilt, be justified when thou speakest,* and *be clear when thou judgest.*

A third reason why the penitent sues for mercy at the hand of God is, because God alone certainly knows, and is always able to punish, the sins of men. David sinned "against" many; as against Uriah,

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whom he slew; against Bathsheba, whom he corrupted; and against all the people, to whom he became the cause of much offence and scandal. But the sin was committed in secret; and if it had not been so, he, as king, had no superior, or judge, in this matter, but God only; who, being able to convict the offender, as he did, by the prophet Nathan, would assuredly be justified in the sentence he should pronounce. And he will appear to be so in his determinations at the last day, when he will surprise the wretched unthinking sinner, with a declaration similar to that which he made, by his prophet, to the royal offender, 2 Sam. xii. 12. "Thou didst it "secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, "and before the sun."

5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

The divine mercy is implored by the penitent, fourthly, because that alone can dry up the fountain of original corruption, from which the streams of actual transgression derive themselves; and which is here only lamented as their cause, not alleged as their excuse; seeing, that the greater our danger is of falling, the greater should be our care to stand. David was the offspring of the marriage-bed, which is declared to be "honourable and undefiled." No more, therefore, can be intended here, than that a creature begotten by a sinner, and formed in the womb of a sinner, cannot be without that taint which is hereditary to every son and daughter of Adam and Eve*.

* And so much must surely be intended, as the learned Bos-

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6. *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts,* Heb. *the reins: and in the hidden* part *thou shalt make,* or, *hast made me to know wisdom.*

The force of "Behold," is—"It is too plain; I "feel it but too sensibly; the punishment I suffer is "evidence sufficient, that thou art not contented "with a superficial appearance of goodness: thou "lovest truth and sincerity in the bottom of the "heart." This God was now teaching him, by the correction he made him suffer. The punishment inflicted tended to give him a right understanding of things, and to work it deep into him. MUDGE.

7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

He therefore petitioneth, in this verse, for the purification which cometh from God only, through the one great propitiatory sacrifice, by the Holy Spirit; and which was foreshown, under the law, by the ceremony of sprinkling the unclean person with a bunch of "hyssop," dipped in the "water of separation." This rite is described, Numb. xix. and explained, Heb. ix. 13, 14. "If the blood of bulls and of "goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the un-"clean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how "much more shall the blood of CHRIST, who, "through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without "spot to God, purge your conscience from dead

suet observeth—Numquid David de adulterio natus erat? De Jesse viro justo natus erat, et conjuge ipsius. Quid ergo se dicit in iniquitate conceptum, nisi quia suscepit personam humani generis, et attendit omnium vincula, propaginem mortis, originem iniquitatis advertit?

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"works to serve the living God!" From the latter part of the verse we learn, that, by grace and mercy, the pardoned penitent is arrayed in garments no less pure and splendid than those of innocence itself.

8. *Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

Next to the blessing of forgiveness, is to be desired that joy and comfort in the conscience which forgiveness only can inspire: the effect of this, in repairing the vigour of the spirit, decayed through sorrow and anguish, is compared to setting broken bones, and restoring them again to perfect strength. At the resurrection of the body, this petition will be granted in a literal sense, when the "bones," that are mouldered into dust, shall "rejoice, and flourish "as an herb." Isai. lxvi. 14.

9. *Hide thy face from my sins; and blot out all mine iniquities.*

The soul, still restless and uneasy, reiterates her request, that God would not only cease to behold her iniquity for the present, as a man who turneth away his face from a writing, but that he would not behold it more, as a man who blotteth out what is written, so that it can never be read again.

10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right, or, constant, spirit within me.*

The purification and renovation of the heart and spirit of a man is a work to which that power only is equal which, in the beginning, created all things, and, in the end, will create all things new. "A right "spirit is renewed within us," when the affections

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turn from the world to God, and charity takes the place of concupiscence.

11. *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me.*

The soul that is truly penitent, dreads nothing but the thought of being rejected from the "presence," and deserted by the "Spirit" of God. This is the most deplorable and irremediable effect of sin: but it is one, that in general perhaps is the least considered and regarded of all others.

12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me* with thy *free*, or, *princely*, or, *liberal, Spirit.*

David prayeth to God to restore to him the unspeakable joy of that salvation which, as a Prophet, he had so often contemplated, and celebrated in his divine compositions; he prayeth also to be preserved and continued in that state of salvation, by the Spirit of God, which might enable him to act as became a Prophet and a king, free from base desires and enslaving lusts.

13. Then *will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*

He that would employ his abilities, his influence, and his authority, in the reformation of others, must take care to reform himself, before he enters upon the work. "When thou art converted," said Christ to St. Peter, "strengthen thy brethren:" Luke xxii. 32. The history of David has "taught" us many useful lessons; such as, the frailty of man, the danger of temptation, the torment of sin, the nature and efficacy of repentance, the mercy and the judge-

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ments of God, &c. &c. by which many "sinners" have in all ages since been "converted," and many more will be converted, so long as the Scriptures shall be read, and the 51st Psalm recited in the church.

14. *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation:* and *my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

The unhappy criminal entreats, in this verse, for the divine help and deliverance, as if he not only heard the voice of innocent blood crying from the ground, but as if he saw the murdered Uriah coming upon him for vengeance, like an armed man. If he can but obtain the pardon of this sin, he promises to publish to all the world the righteousness of God, who justifieth sinners, and showeth mercy to the penitent; though he must, at the same time, publish likewise his own heinous and horrid wickedness.

15. *O* LORD, *open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.*

The mouth which sin hath closed, can only be opened by pardon: and to show this, he who came, conferring pardon, caused the tongue of the dumb to speak, and to sing praises to the Lord God of Israel. Our church, with great propriety, daily maketh her prayer in the words of this verse, before she entereth upon that part of her service, which consisteth of praise and thanksgiving.

16. *For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give* it; *thou delightest not in burnt offerings.* 17. *The sacrifices of God* are *a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

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David, in this Psalm, is so evangelical, and has his thoughts so fixed upon Gospel remission, that he considers the Levitical sacrifices as already abolished, for their insufficiency to take away sin; affirming them to be (as indeed they were) nothing, in the sight of God, if compared with the sacrifice of the body of sin, offered by contrition and mortification, through faith in Him who, in the fulness of time, was to die unto sin once, that we, together with him, might for ever live unto God.

18. *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*

The king forgets not to ask mercy for his people, as well as for himself; that so neither his own nor their sins might prevent either the building and flourishing of the earthly Jerusalem, or, what was of infinitely greater importance, the promised blessing of MESSIAH, who was to descend from him, and to rear the walls of the new Jerusalem. And thus it ought to be the fervent prayer of every man, especially if he be placed in any exalted station, ecclesiastical or civil, that no sins by him committed, may any way prejudice others, or obstruct the edification of the church.

19. *Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

This had its literal accomplishment, when Jerusalem was finished; when the temple was erected on mount Sion; and when the Lord graciously vouchsafed to accept the sacrifices, there offered on his

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holy altars, by king Solomon, at the head of his faithful and devout people. It is spiritually true in the Christian church, where the substance of all the Mosaic types and shadows is offered and presented to the Father, by the Prince of Peace, at the head of the Israel of God. And it will be eternally verified in the kingdom of heaven, where the sacrifices of righteousness and love, of praise and thanksgiving, will never cease to be offered to him that sitteth on the throne, by the church triumphant in glory.

PSALM LII.

ARGUMENT.

In the person of Doeg the Edomite, who was the persecutor of David, and the murderer of the priests, are described, 1—4. the enemies of the truth and the church in all ages; whose utter destruction from the presence of the Lord is foretold, 5. with the exultation of the righteous over them, 6, 7; these last rejoice, 8. in the flourishing state under grace, 9. in hope of future glory, through faith and patience.

1. *Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God* endureth *continually.*

"The Psalmist thought it strange," says the pious and ingenious Norris, "that any man should value "himself for being able to do mischief, when God

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"esteemed it his glory to do good." In vain did Doeg the Edomite boast himself, in the mischief he had done, by massacring the innocent priests and their families; since "the goodness of God," which is "unchangeable," had decreed the preservation of David. As vainly did Herod, the Idumean, or Edomite, glory in the slaughter of the Bethlehemitish infants, since Heaven had determined, that the child Jesus should not be one of the number. A persecution may produce martyrs; but the gates of hell are never to prevail against the church.

2. *Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.*

The mischief done to religion by men of Doeg's turn, is done by the tongue, before it is done by the hand; it is planned leisurely, and executed speedily and deceitfully *.

3. *Thou lovest evil more than good;* and *lying rather than to speak righteousness.* 4. *Thou lovest all devouring words, O* thou *deceitful tongue.*

As the Christian spirit delighteth itself in goodness, truth, and charity, so the antichristian spirit is here characterized by its offending, not out of ignorance or inadvertence, but mere love of wickedness, falsehood, and malice. To this pitch many have ar-

* "Sicut novacula acuta"—quæ cum tangere leniter et tantum radere videretur, altè infigitur, ac velut blandiendi specie vulnerat: ita Doeg cum Achimelech in tabernaculo Domiui amicitiæ pietatisque specie versatus, fœdo indicio viros optimos prodigit. 1 Reg. xxi. 7. xxii. 9. BOSSUET. So MUDGE—"Working treacherously," that is, Thy tongue is like a sharp razor, that cuts one's throat before one is aware of it.

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rived; and who, that enters upon a course of sin, can say, that he shall stop short of it?

5. *God shall likewise destroy thee for ever; he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of* thy *dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living.*

Wonderful is the force of the verbs in the original, which convey to us the four ideas of "laying prostrate, dissolving as by fire, sweeping away as with "a besom, and totally extirpating root and branch," as a tree is eradicated from the spot on which it grew. If a farther comment be wanted, it may be found in the history of David's enemies, and the crucifiers of the Son of David: but the passage will be fully and finally explained by the destruction of the world of the ungodly at the last day.

6. *The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him,* saying, 7. *Lo,* this is *the man* that *made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches,* and *strengthened himself in his wickedness.*

Such shall be the triumph of Messiah, and of all his faithful servants with him, over the enemies of man's salvation, at that hour, when, the world being in flames, the confidence, that hath been placed in it, must perish for evermore.

8. *But I* am *like a green olive tree in the house of God: I will trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.*

The representative of Messiah portrays himself, as the reverse of Doeg and the wicked, in terms applicable likewise to his great original. He was in the house of God, they were in the world; he was as a

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fruitful olive tree, they were as barren unprofitable wood; he was to be daily more and more strengthened, established, settled, and increased; they were to be cast down, broken, swept away, and extirpated; and all this, because he had trusted in the mercy of God, they in the abundance of their riches. We Gentiles were branches of the "wild olive," but are now grafted into the good one: Lord, make us to flourish and bear fruit, in thy immortal "courts," world without end!

9. *I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done* it; *and I will wait on thy name, for* it is *good* before thy saints.*

Faith foresees salvation, and anticipates the day of victory and triumph; in the mean time, while she waiteth patiently for its coming, she refresheth and comforteth herself with frequent meditation on the virtue and power of that saving "name," which is "as ointment poured forth;" by the fragrance of its odours inviting and alluring innumerable converts to run after their beloved Redeemer, in the way of his commandments.

TENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LIII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is in a manner the same with Psalm xiv. except that there is some difference in ver. 5. for

* It is a "goodly thing," it carries a good appearance, it looks well before the friends of God, to see me praising him, and putting my trust in him. MUDGE.

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which, as well as for the explanation of the whole, the reader is referred to the comment on Psalm xiv.

PSALM LIV.

ARGUMENT.

David, as it has been supposed, when betrayed by the Ziphites, and surrounded by Saul, 1, 2. committeth his cause, and preferreth his prayer, to God; 3. complaineth of his cruel treatment; 4, 5. expresseth his assurance of the divine favour, and the destruction of his enemies. 6, 7. Being delivered from his danger, he blesseth and praiseth God. See the history, 1 Sam. xxiii. The application to Christ, and to Christians, is plain and easy; for which reason, our church hath appointed this Psalm to be read on Good Friday.

1. *Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.* 2. *Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.*

Happy the man, to whom, in the day of trouble, the "name of the Lord is a strong tower," into which "he runneth, and is safe:" Prov. xviii. 10. Happy the man, that can with an holy confidence, commit his cause to the judgement and determination of God, and expect redress from the Almighty. His prayer mounteth up to heaven, and returneth not without a blessing.

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3. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them.

The Ziphites, though David's countrymen, acted the part of "strangers," or "aliens," in seeking to deliver him up to his unjust and cruel enemy. Such a part did the whole Jewish nation act towards their anointed Prince and Saviour, when they actually delivered him over to the Roman power. And the church frequently meeteth with such treatment at the hands of her children, as she had reason to expect only from "strangers to the covenant of promise." Something like this always happens, when men, instead of setting God, set the world before their eyes.

4. Behold, God is *mine helper; the* LORD is *with them that uphold my soul. 5. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off,* or, *thou shalt cut them off, in thy truth.*

In all dangers and difficulties, whether temporal or spiritual, the faithful sons and servants of God fix their eyes upon their heavenly Father, and gracious Master: they have recourse to the divine promises, the performance of which they know to be certain, and therefore can foresee and foretel the destruction of their enemies. Thus David, and a greater than David, supported themselves in their troubles; and the church, with her children, must do likewise.

6. I will freely sacrifice unto thee; I will praise thy name, O LORD, *for* it is *good. 7. For he hath delivered me out of all my trouble: and mine eye*

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hath seen his desire, Heb. *mine eye hath looked, upon mine enemies.*

Saul, under the direction of the Ziphites, having encompassed David on every side, was suddenly called off to defend his country from an invasion of the Philistines; by which means David escaped, and "beheld his enemies" retreating. 1 Sam. xxiii. 27. For this event he offers the sacrifice of a heart freed from fear, and praises the name of his great Deliverer. Christians should follow his example: they should consider, how great things God hath done for THEM, and should never suffer the voice of praise and thanksgiving to cease in the church of the redeemed. Beautiful and emphatical will these two concluding verses appear, when conceived as proceeding from the mouth of our Lord, upon his resurrection. And we hope one day to repeat them, on a like occasion, saying, each in his own person; "I "will freely sacrifice unto thee; I will praise thy "name, O Lord, for it is good. For he hath deli-"vered me out of all my trouble, and mine eye "hath looked upon mine enemies."

PSALM LV.

ARGUMENT.

David, as it is supposed, when driven out of Jerusalem by the rebellion of Absalom, and in danger of being suddenly cut off, 1—8. maketh his prayer to God, and describeth the sorrowful state of his

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soul; 9—11. entreateth that the iniquitous counsels of the rebels may be divided and confounded; 12—14. upbraideth Ahithophel, the Judas of those times, with his foul treason; 15—19. foretelleth the tragical end of faction, and his own re-establishment through faith in God, notwithstanding the base treachery of his favourite son and favourite servant.

1. *Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my petition.* 2. *Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint,* Heb. *am dejected in my meditation, and make a noise,* Heb. *am in a violent, tumultuous agitation, as the waves of the sea.*

In the person of David, driven from his throne, and put in fear of his life, by Absalom and Ahithophel, we here behold our blessed Redeemer, on the day of his sufferings, praying earnestly, and repeating his supplications, as in the garden of Gethsemane, at the prospect of that sea of sorrows which was then about to overwhelm his agonizing soul. In all our afflictions, he was afflicted: in all his afflictions, let us be so.

3. *Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.*

O my God, how can we repine and murmur at any oppression and calumny which we suffer from the world, when we see, not only thy servant David, but thy son Jesus, thus hated, slandered, and persecuted, by their own subjects, and their own children?

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4. *My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.* 5. *Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.*

These words describe the state of David's mind, when he went over the brook Cedron, and up mount Olivet, "weeping as he went," and expecting speedily to be cut off: 2 Sam. xv. 23. 30. they describe the agony of the Son of David, when he likewise went over the same brook Cedron, John xviii. 1. at the time of his passion, when his soul was "sore amazed and very heavy, and exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:" Mark xiv. 33, 34. and every man will too surely find them applicable to himself, if not often before, yet certainly in, the day when the king of terrors shall draw up all his forces in array against him.

6. *And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.* 7. *Lo, then would I wander far off,* and *remain in the wilderness.* 8. *I would hasten my escape from the windy storm* and *tempest.*

The calamitous situation of the Israelitish monarch forced from him a wish, that, like the bird of innocence and peace, he could in a moment banish himself from the distractions of his rebellious kingdom, and enjoy, in holy solitude, that repose which his sceptre and his guards were not able to procure him. There are few crowned heads, perhaps, which have not more than once found occasion to form, if not to utter, a wish of the same nature. Much more must it have been the wish of that King of Israel,

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whose crown was literally one of thorns; and it often will be the wish of the devout Christian, who, sensible of the sins and follies that overspread the earth, is taught to aspire after his heavenly country, and to delight in that resemblance of it which the closet best affords.

9. *Destroy, O* LORD, *and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city.*

In these words, king David beseecheth God to divide, confound, and bring to nothing, the counsels of an iniquitous and rampant faction; for so, in the history, we find him saying, "O LORD, I pray thee, "turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness:" 2 Sam. xv. 31. The royal prayer was heard; the counsel of Ahithophel was overthrown by Hushai, and the disappointed traitor became his own executioner. The treason of Judas, against the Son of David, brought him likewise to the same end. Every one, who finds himself tempted to betray the cause of his prince, or his Saviour, should set these two examples before his eyes.

10. *Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof; mischief also and sorrow* are *in the midst of it.* 11. *Wickedness* is *in the midst thereof; deceit and guile depart not from her streets.*

The violence and strife, mentioned at the conclusion of the preceding verse, are here described as going their rounds, like an armed watch, upon the walls, to guard rebellion, which had taken up its residence in the heart of the city, from the attacks of loyalty, right, and justice, driven with the king beyond Jordan. Thus from the same city was righ-

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teousness afterwards expelled, in the person of the King of righteousness, and nothing left, but "mis-"chief and sorrow, wickedness, deceit, and guile," encompassed with a guard "of violence and strife." Whether the state of the Gentile Christian church, in the last days, will not too much resemble that of Jerusalem before its destruction, is a matter of sad and sorrowful consideration.

12. *For* it was *not an enemy* that *reproached me, then I could have borne* it; *neither* was it *he that hated me* that *did magnify* himself *against me, then I would have hid myself from him.* 13. *But* it was *thou, a man mine equal, my guide,* Heb. *my disciple, and mine acquaintance.* 14. *We took sweet counsel together,* and *walked unto the house of God in company.*

The many aggravating circumstances of Ahithophel's treason against David, and that of Judas against Christ, are here strongly marked. The treachery of pretended friends is generally to the church, as it was to her Lord, the beginning of sorrows. Ingratitude, malice, and falsehood, are ingredients that must always meet in the composition of a traitor.

15. *Let death seize upon them,* or, *death shall remove,* or, *take them away;* and *let them,* or, *they shall, go down quick into hell: for wickedness* is *in their dwellings,* and *among them.*

In these words is predicted the tragical fate of Ahithophel, and those who followed Absalom; of Judas and the Jews; and of all, who shall resemble them in wickedness. The sudden destruction of

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Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who for stirring up a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, "went down "alive into the pit," seems here alluded to, as the grand representation of the manner in which the bottomless pit shall one day shut her mouth for ever upon all the impenitent enemies of the true King of Israel, and great High-Priest of our profession.

16. *As for me, I will call upon God, and the* LORD *shall save me.* 17. *Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.*

Prayer is the believer's universal medicine for all the disorders of the soul within, and his invincible shield against every enemy that can attack him from without. "Morning, Evening, and Noon," were three of the hours of prayer in the Jewish church. We find holy Daniel observing them in Babylon, notwithstanding the royal decree, which made it death for him so to do. The event fully justified him, and showed the power of true devotion, whose high prerogative it still is, to save the righteous from the mouth of THE LION. See Dan. vi. 10. 22. 2 Tim. iv. 17. 1 Pet. v. 8.

18. *He hath delivered,* or, *shall deliver, my soul in peace from the battle* that was, or, *is, against me; for there were,* or, *are, many with me.*

David was delivered in peace, when, after having suppressed the rebellion, he was brought back in triumph to his capital; the Son of David was delivered in peace, when, victorious over the enemies of man's salvation, he arose from the dead, and returned to the Jerusalem above; the believing soul is delivered

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in peace, when her sins are forgiven, and her corruptions mortified; and the bodies of the saints shall be delivered in peace, at the resurrection of the just. The ground of all these deliverances is one and the same—"They that are with us are more than they "that are against us:" 2 Kings vi. 16. "Greater "is he that is in us, than he that is in the world." 1 John iv. 4.

19. *God shall hear, and afflict*, or, *humble*, *them, even he that abideth of old. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God;* or, *because they will not be converted, and fear God.*

He who inhabiteth eternity, remaining unchangeably the same, from everlasting to everlasting, hath determined to hear the prayers of his faithful servants, and finally to humble the pride of his unrepenting adversaries. These are the decrees which he hath thought fit to promulgate; and on them we may safely depend.

20. *He hath put forth his hands against such as be*, or, *were*, *at peace with him; he hath broken his covenant.*

The Prophet goes on to describe the perfidy of traitors, like Ahithophel and Judas. Every wilful and malicious sinner "puts forth his hand against" the person who is "at peace with him," nay, who "made his peace" with the Father; and, by so doing, "breaketh the covenant" into which by baptism he was admitted. O blessed Jesus, how often do we betray thee to thine enemies, our own lusts, and consider it not!

21. The words *of his mouth were smoother than*

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better, but war was *in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet* were *they drawn swords.*

Of this complexion are the cant of hypocrites, the charity of bigots and fanatics, the benevolence of atheists, the professions of the world, the allurements of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan, when he thinks proper to appear in the character of an angel of light.

22. *Cast thy burden upon the* LORD, *and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

The conclusion of the whole matter is, that amidst all dangers and adversities, whensoever they oppress us, we are to put our full trust and confidence only in his mercy, who delivered David, and the Son of David, out of all their troubles. He, who once bore the burden of our sorrows, requested of us, that we would now and ever permit him to bear the burden of our cares; that, as he knoweth what is best for us, he may provide it accordingly. When shall we trust Christ to govern the world which he hath redeemed?

23. *But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.*

O terrible voice of most just judgement, pronounced against rebels and murderers! Of the sure and certain execution of his righteous sentence who can doubt, that considers the fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; of Absalom, Ahithophel, and Judas; and, above all, of the city which contained within its walls those rebels, and murderers of the Son of God? Let

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us trust for ever in Him alone who can thus deliver, and thus destroy.

ELEVENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LVI.

ARGUMENT.

David, in danger from the Philistines, among whom he was driven, as well as from Saul and his associates, is supposed to, 1, 2. make supplication to God, in whom, 3, 4. he placeth all his hope and confidence, 5—7. of being saved from the wiles and stratagems of the adversary; 8, 9. he comforteth himself with the consideration that God taketh account of his sufferings, and will appear on his behalf; 10, 11. he repeateth the declaration of his faith in the divine promises; and, 12, 13. concludeth with paying his tribute of praise and thanksgiving. What David was in Philistia, the disciples of the Son of David are in the world.

1. *Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.* 2. *Mine enemies would daily swallow* me *up, for* they be *many that fight against me, O thou Most High.*

The same words are applicable to the situation and circumstances of David, pursued by his enemies; of Christ, persecuted by the Jews; of the church afflicted in the world; and of the soul, encompassed by

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enemies, against whom she is forced to wage perpetual war.

3. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* 4. *In God I will praise,* or, *glory in, his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*

Whoever, like the prophet Elisha's servant, beholdeth only the forces of the enemy, will be apt, like him, to cry out, "Alas, my master! how shall we "do?" 2 Kings vi. 15. But when our eyes are "opened," to see those "horses and chariots of fire" which are "round about us;" when we perceive the promises of their Word, and the mighty succours of the Spirit, which are all on our side; we no longer fear the terrors or the temptations of flesh and blood; but find ourselves enabled to do, and to suffer, all things, through faith in him who strengthened us to the battle. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, "nor forsake thee;" so that WE may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what "man shall do unto me." Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

5. *Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts* are *against me for evil.* 6. *They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, they wait for my soul.*

These words could not be more literally descriptive of the behaviour of David's persecutors, than they certainly are of that conduct which the Scribes and Pharisees observed towards our blessed Lord; when, like serpents by the way side, they "marked "his steps," till a proper opportunity offered, to dart from their lurking-place, and "bruise his heel."

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We think it hard, when men use us in this manner; but surely we either forget that the Son of God was so used before us, or that we are his disciples.

7. *Shall they escape by iniquity? In* thine *anger cast down thy people, O God.*

The signal vengeance inflicted on the enemies of David, of Christ, and of the church, in different ages, may serve to convince us, that if we would "escape," it must be FROM sin, not BY it.

8. *Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle:* are they *not in thy book?*

Known unto God are all the afflictions of his servants; while banished, like David, from their abiding city and country, they "wander" here below, in the land of their pilgrimage. The "tears" of penitents are had in remembrance, and, as so many precious gems, will one day adorn their crowns. How dear, then, in the sight of God, were the "wanderings" and the "tears" of the holy Jesus, submitting to perform penance for those sins which he never committed!

9. *When I cry* unto thee, *then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God* is *for me.*

What can we possibly desire more, than this assurance, that, how many, or how formidable soever our enemies may be, yet there is one always ready to appear in our defence, whose power no creature is able to resist? "This I know," saith David; and had we the faith of David, we should know it too.

10. *In God will I praise* his *word: in the* LORD *will I praise* his *word.* 11. *In God have I put my trust; I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.*

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See above, on verse 4. 12. *Thy vows* are *upon me, O God; I will render praises unto thee.* 13. *For thou hast delivered my soul from death;* wilt *not* thou deliver *my feet,* or, *my feet also,* or, *assuredly, from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*

At the conclusion of this Psalm, and of many others, the Prophet speaketh of his deliverance as actually accomplished; he acknowledgeth himself under the obligation of the vows made to God in the night of affliction, which he is resolved to pay on the morning of triumph and jubilee. O come that glorious morning, when the redeemed shall sing eternal praises to the Lord God of their salvation, for having "delivered their souls from death, and their feet "from falling, that they may walk before him in the "light of the living!"

PSALM LVII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is said to have been composed by David, on occasion of his escape from Saul, in the cave at Engedi. See 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. And the church by her appointment of it as one of the proper Psalms for Easter-day, hath instructed us to transfer the ideas to the resurrection of Christ from the grave. The Psalm containeth, 1—3. an act of faith in the promises; 4. a description of grievous sufferings; 5. a prayer for the exaltation of God's

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glory, which is repeated again at the conclusion; 6. a prediction of judgement on the adversary; 7—10. a strain of the highest exultation and jubilee.

1. *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until* these *calamities be overpast.*

David, encompassed by his enemies at Engedi, putteth up this prayer to God; the same prayer we may suppose to have been used by our blessed Lord, when drawing near to the grave, and gate of death: and the church ever continueth the use of it, until she be delivered from the bondage of corruption. In the mean time, she teacheth her children to put themselves, living and dying, under the protection of him who is always ready to "gather them, as a "hen gathereth her chickens under her wings." There they may rest in peace and security.

2. *I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth* all things *for me.*

David cried unto God, and was delivered out of the hand of Saul; the Son of David cried unto God, and was delivered from the power of the grave: the saints on earth cry unto God, and shall be delivered out of their troubles; the souls under the altar in heaven cry unto God, Rev. vi. 10. and shall obtain a reunion with their bodies. Thus God "perform-"eth all things for us," as well as for David.

3. *He shall send from heaven, and save me* from

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the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

We have all an enemy, who would "swallow us "up; and we look for the manifestation of the divine "mercy and truth" from "heaven," for the salvation of our souls, and the redemption of our bodies. A grand specimen of this manifestation was exhibited to the world, on that glorious morning when Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

4. *My soul* is *among lions:* and *I lie* even among *them that are set on fire,* even *the sons of men, whose teeth* are *spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.*

The fiercest of beasts, the most devouring of elements, and the sharpest of military weapons, are selected, to represent the power and fury of David's enemies. How much stronger, and more furious, were the enemies of Christ, who, in the day of his passion, resembled Daniel in the lions' den, the three children in the fiery furnace, and who stood alone, exposed to the assaults of men and evil spirits!

5. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;* let *thy glory* be *above all the earth.*

God is exalted and glorified among men by the display of mercy and judgement, in the salvation of his children from the hands of their enemies. But chiefly was he exalted, when, having raised up his Son Jesus, he set him at his own right hand, far above all principalities and powers, and every thing that is named in heaven and in earth. This was the great exaltation, prefigured, foretold, and incessantly prayed for, in the ancient church.

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6. *They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen*, or, *shall fall* themselves.

David compares himself, 1 Sam. xxvi. 20. to a bird upon the mountains, which the fowler endeavoureth to hunt into the nets and snares set up and prepared for its destruction. So was the most innocent dove, the holy Jesus, persecuted by the Jews, until they had driven him into the snares of death, and laid him low in the grave. But the enemies of both received, in the end, the due reward of their deeds, and "fell into the pit they had digged."

7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.*

At the prospect of approaching deliverance, the Prophet, in the person of Christ, declareth his heart to be fixed and established, steadfast and unmoveable in the midst of trouble, even then preparing to celebrate its future enlargement with songs of praise.

8. *Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I* myself *will awake early*, or, *awaken the morning.*

For this purpose, he calls upon his tongue, with all his instruments of music, all the organs of the body and affections of the soul, to unite their powers in sweetest harmony and concert, and to awaken the sluggish morning with the voice of melody, sounding forth the glories of redemption. Thus should the morning be ever celebrated, on which Christ "arose "from the dead, and became the first-fruits of them "that slept."

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9. *I will praise thee, O* LORD, *among the people; I will sing unto thee among the nations.* 10. *For thy mercy* is *great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.*

The resurrection of Jesus from the grave, foreshadowed in the deliverance of David from the hand of Saul, was a transaction which caused the heavens, and all the powers therein, to extol the mercy and the truth of God. The nations of the earth whose are the benefits and the blessings of that transaction, are, therefore, bound evermore to make it the subject of their praises and thanksgivings; which is done by the members of our church, every Easter-day, in the words of this very Psalm.

11. *Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;* let *thy glory* be *above all the earth.*

Even so, be thou still exalted, O blessed Jesu! above the heavens, while the angels sing their hallelujahs on high; and let thy glory be above all the earth, while, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, the congregations of the redeemed incessantly magnify thy salvation below.

The church triumphant, and the church below,
In songs of praise their present union show;
Their joys are full, our expectation long;
In life we differ, but we join in song.
Angels and we, assisted by this art,
May sing together, though we dwell apart.

WALLER on Divine Poesie.

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PSALM LVIII.

ARGUMENT.

In the person of Saul and his iniquitous counsellors, the enemies of Christ and the church, 1, 2. are reproved, and, 3—5. their malice is described, by comparing it to the poison of serpents, which are proof against every art made use of to tame them: 6—9. the destruction of the wicked is foretold, and illustrated by six similitudes; 10. the triumph of the righteous is likewise predicted; as also, 11. the effect it will produce, in manifesting to all the world the providence and glory of God.

1. *Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?* 2. *Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands,* or, *your hands from violence, in the earth.*

The proceedings of Doeg, and other associates of Saul, against David; those of Judas and the sanhedrim, against our Lord; and those of wicked princes, and court sycophants, in different ages, against the faith and the church; as they spring from the same principles, so they flow pretty much in the same channel. Such men may here see their characters drawn, and their end foretold.

3. *The wicked are estranged, from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*

The tares sown by the enemy, in human nature,

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appear early; and show us how far we are "estrang-"ed" from original truth and righteousness. What can be expected, unless grace and discipline prevent it, but that "out of the serpent's root shall come "forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery "flying serpent."

4. *Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear:* 5. *Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*

The wicked are here compared to serpents, for that malignity in their tempers which is the venom and poison of the intellectual world. And whereas there are some kinds even of serpents, which, by musical sounds, may, for a time, as it is said, be disarmed of their rage, and rendered so tame as to be handled without danger*; yet the evil dispositions

* Bochart quotes several ancient authors, who mention this effect of music, and among them Virgil, Æneid, vii. v. 753.

"Vipereo generi, et graviter spirantibus hydris
"Spargere qui somnos CANTUque manuque solebat."

The elder Scaliger, as quoted by the same learned critic, writes thus: "Nos aliquando vidimus cantationibus e cæteris exiri "serpentes:" and Mr. Boyle, in his Essay on the Great Effects of Languid Motion, p. 71, ed. 1685, gives us the following passage, from Sir H. Blunt's Voyage into the Levant, p. 81, edit. 5. "Many rarities of living creatures I saw in Grand Cairo; but "the most ingenious was a nest of four-legged serpents, of two "feet long, black and ugly, kept by a Frenchman; who, when "he came to handle them, they would not endure him, but ran "and hid in their hole; then would he take his cittern, and play "upon it; they, hearing his music, came all crawling to his feet, "and began to climb up him, till he gave over playing; then

of some men, like those of one particular species of the serpentine race, are often invincible. The enmity of a Saul, was proof against the heavenly strains of the son of Jesse; and He, who spake as "never "man spake," was stung to death by "a generation "of vipers."

6. *Break*, or, *thou wilt break, their teeth, O God, in their mouths; break*, or, *thou wilt break, out the teeth of the young lions, O* LORD.

The destruction of the wicked is represented under six similitudes. The first is that of breaking the teeth of lions, being the most terrible weapons of the most terrible animals. But what is human power, at its highest exaltation, if compared to that of God? The mountains of Gilboa can tell us, the desolated Zion can inform us, how the mighty are fallen, and the weapons of war perished! because the mighty had exalted themselves, and the weapons of war had been lifted up, against truth and innocence, protected by the decrees of Heaven.

7. *Let them*, or, *they shall, melt away* as *waters* which *run continually*, or, *pass away;* when *he bendeth* his bow to shoot *his arrows, let them*, or, *they shall, be as cut in pieces.*

The second similitude used to illustrate the destruction of the wicked, is that of torrents and inunda-

"away they ran." The "deaf" adder may either be a serpent of a species naturally deaf (for several such kinds are mentioned by Avicenne, as quoted by Bochart) or one deaf by accident: in either case, she may be said, in the language of poetry, to "stop "her ear," from her being proof to all the efforts of the charmer.

MERRICK.

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tions, which descend with great noise from the mountains, and cover the face of a country; but their cause soon ceasing to act, they run off and appear no more; herein affording a fine emblem of the weakness and instability of earthly power. The impotence of human efforts against divine counsels is compared, thirdly, to a man drawing a bow, when the arrow on the string is broken in two; and therefore, instead of flying to the mark, falls useless at his feet.

8. *As a snail* which *melteth, let* every one of them *pass away;* like *the untimely birth of a woman,* that *they may not see the sun.* Or, *As a melting snail he shall pass away; as an abortion, they see not the sun.*

A snail, which, coming forth of his shell, marks his path with slime, continually losing some part of his substance in his progress; and an abortion, which consumes away in the like manner: these are the fourth and fifth images, selected to represent the transient nature of worldly greatness, still wasting, till it comes to nothing; and the miserable fate of those who perish, with their half-formed devices, nor ever behold the Sun of Righteousness.

9. *Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in* his *wrath;* or, *he shall take them away alive, as with a whirlwind, in* his *wrath.*

Wicked men have, in common with others, that tendency to decay which is entailed on the world, and on all things therein; but they are warned, by this sixth and last similitude, to prevent the judgements of the Almighty. These often break forth like

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a whirlwind, or a thunder-storm, and sweep away at once, in the flower of their strength, and the height of their prosperity, the tyrannical oppressors of the people of God; whose short-lived glory, and sudden extinction, are aptly resembled to that crackling and momentary blaze which is produced by a fire, kindled among thorns, under a pot.

10. *The righteous shall rejoice, when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked:* 11. *So that a man shall say, Verily,* there is *a reward for the righteous: verily, he is,* or, *there is, a God that judgeth in the earth.*

The victories of that JUST ONE, gained in his own person and in those of his faithful servants, over the enemies of man's salvation, are productive of a joy, which springeth not from love of revenge, but is inspired by a view of the divine mercy, justice, and truth, displayed in the redemption of the elect, the punishment of the ungodly, and the accomplishment of the promises. Whoever duly weighteth and considereth these things, will diligently seek after the reward of righteousness, and humbly adore the providence, which ordereth all things aright, in heaven and earth.

ELEVENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LIX.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is said to have been composed on occasion of David's escape, when Saul sent, and they

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watched the house to kill him. See 1 Sam. xix. 11—18. David in these, as in many other circumstances of his life, may be considered as the representative of Messiah, 1, 2. praying to be delivered from the power of his blood-thirsty enemies, whose indefatigable malice he, 3—7. describes; but, 8—10. predicts his own enlargement through the tender mercy and mighty power of God; as also, 11—15. the singular vengeance to be poured out upon his enemies, for their punishment, and the admonition of others. The Psalm concludes with a strain of exultation and thanksgiving.

1. *Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God; defend me,* Heb. *exalt me, from them that rise up against me.* 2. *Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.*

In these words we hear the voice of David, when a prisoner in his own house; the voice of Christ, when surrounded by his merciless enemies; the voice of the church, when under bondage in the world; and the voice of the Christian, when under temptation, affliction, and persecution.

3. *For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul; the mighty are gathered against me; not* for *my transgression, nor* for *my sin, O* LORD. 4. *They run, and prepare themselves without* my *fault; awake to help me, and behold.*

The mighty men of Saul were gathered against David, who had been guilty of no offence against the

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king, and therefore was, so far, innocent. The Jews and Romans were gathered against Jesus Christ, who had committed no sin at all, and was perfectly innocent. And the world is oftentimes in arms against the children of God, only for doing what it is their duty to do. In all such cases, God is to be applied to, as the helper and avenger of those who suffer unjustly.

5. *Thou, therefore, O* LORD *God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake,* or, *thou shalt awake, to visit all the heathen: be not merciful,* or, *thou wilt not be merciful, to any wicked transgressors.*

The Prophet, in this verse, seemeth to respect that great day of final retribution, which is to succeed the day of grace, the accepted time of repentance and pardon. For then it is that Jehovah shall awake, to judge the nations; to reward every man according to his deeds; and to banish for ever, from his presence, the impenitent workers of iniquity. The malicious adversaries of David, and those of the Son of David, may not then find the mercy, so often by them rejected, in the days of their flesh.

6. *They return at evening; they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*

The emissaries of Saul, coming after David in the "evening," besetting his house, and blocking up the avenues, are compared to a set of hungry bloodhounds in quest of their prey. But the picture is drawn likewise for that herd of evening wolves who thirsted after the blood of the Lamb of God, on whom their mouths were opened, crying, "Crucify him! "crucify him!"

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7. *Behold, they belch*, or, *spout, out with their mouth; swords* are *in their lips, for who*, say, they, *doth hear?*

Out of the abundance of malice in the heart, the mouth will speak, like the cutting of a sword; and the wicked take counsel against the just, as if there were no one above who heard and regarded.

8. *But thou, O* LORD, *shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.*

These very expressions are used in the 4th verse of the 2nd Psalm, to denote the futility of all the counsels entered into, by Jew and Gentile, against Messiah and his church. The Psalm before us seems evidently to relate to the same counsels, against the same blessed Person, whatever part of king David's history might be the occasion of its being composed.

9. Because of *his strength will I wait upon thee; for God* is *my defence*, or, *exaltation.* 10. *The God of my mercy shall prevent me; God shall let me see* my desire, Heb. *look, upon mine enemies.*

To the strength of the adversary the Psalmist opposeth that of God, which he foresaw would rescue him, and avenge his cause. In all our troubles let us do likewise; and then, He who exalted David, and a greater than David, will in due time exalt us, and we shall look, without fear, upon our spiritual enemies.

11. *Slay them not, lest my people forget; scatter them by thy power, and bring them down, O* LORD, *our shield.* Or, *Thou wilt not slay them—thou wilt scatter them, &c.*

The Prophet, in the person of Messiah, predicteth

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the singular fate of the Jews; who, for their sins, were not extirpated, lest the Gentile Christians should "forget" their punishment; but were "scat-"tered" among all nations, and degraded from the glorious privileges of that high rank in which they once stood *. Thus doth that people remain, at this day, a monument of God's vengeance against apostasy; a beacon, set up, and kindled by the hand of Heaven, as a warning to all Christian churches, that they split not on the same fatal rock.

12. For *the sin of their mouth* and *the words of their lips, let them,* or, *they shall, even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying* which *they speak.*

The causes of the Jews' dispersion are here assigned, viz. "the sin of their mouth" in the "words "of their lips," or their "hard speeches" spoken against the Son of God; their slanders, lying accusations, and outrageous blasphemies, together with that horrid imprecation in which they involved their descendants; who have groaned under the weight of it for near these 1700 years, and yet still continue to justify the deeds of their fathers, retaining that "pride" in their name, and long since forfeited privileges, which provoked the Romans to destroy their city and country.

13. *Consume* them *in thy wrath, consume* them, or, *thou shalt consume* them, &c. *that they* may *not,*

* Prophetice, Christiani divinæ ultionis oblivisci non possunt, dum Judæi, excidio suo superstites, et ubique vagi, pœnam suam, et pariter, in testimonium, eloquia divina circumferunt.—Bossuet.

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or, *shall not*, be; *and let them*, or, *they shall, know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.*

This prediction was accomplished in the total subversion of Jerusalem by Titus, when the Jews having no longer any city, temple, or civil polity, ceased to "be," as a nation. And they have seen enough to have convinced them, that God is the God "not of "the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also." The Gospel hath been preached, idolatry hath been overthrown, the nations have been converted to the faith of Abraham, and that of David, whose Psalms are used throughout the world; and God, who "ruled "in Jacob, and was known in Jewry," now is known and ruleth "unto the ends of the earth;" for they "have seen the salvation," and submitted to the sceptre, of King Messiah.

14. *And at evening let them,* or, *they shall, return;* and *let them,* or, *they shall, make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.* 15. *Let them,* or, *they shall, wander up and down for meat, and grudge,* or, *howl, if they be not satisfied.*

The punishment inflicted on the wicked often carries the mark of their crime. It is just that they who have thirsted after the blood of the righteous, should want a drop of water to cool their tongues; and the hunger of a dog is deservedly their plague, of whom a resemblance of that unclean animal's disposition hath been the sin. Such is the present condition of the Jews, excluded from the church, and suffering all the calamities of a spiritual famine; and such will be the condition of all those who are to wail and

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lament in vain, without the holy city, for evermore. Rev. xxii. 15.

16. *But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.* 17. *Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God* is *my defence,* and *the God of my mercy.*

While the wicked murmur and repine at the dispensations of Heaven, the righteous are employed in giving thanks and praises for the same; and the "morning" which is to consign the former to the habitations of despair, where no sounds are heard but those of hideous wailings and horrid blasphemies, shall transport the latter to the mansions of felicity, resounding with incessant hallelujahs.

PSALM LX.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm is thought to have been composed by David, when, after his coming to the throne, the tribes of Israel had submitted to his sceptre, and he was engaged in the reduction of the adjacent countries. See the history, 2 Sam. chap. v. and viii. 1—3. He describes what Israel had lately suffered from foreign enemies, and domestic feuds; 4, 5, 6. he declareth himself appointed to conduct his people to victory and triumph, according to a divine prediction; 6, 7.

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he rejoiceth in the accession of the other tribes to that of Judah, and, 8—12. sees Edom, Moab, and Philistia, already subdued by the mighty power of God. All this is now to be spiritually applied, in the Christian church, to the establishment and enlargement of Messiah's kingdom, prefigured by that of David.

1. *O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.*

When the church, by her sins, hath rejected God, she is rejected by him; she is delivered into the hands of her enemies, and suffers persecution: when, by repentance and supplication, she returneth to him, he is ready to meet and receive her. The history of Israel is one continued exemplification of these most interesting truths. It should be the care and endeavour of every church, and every individual, to profit thereby.

2. *Thou hast made the earth,* or, *the land, to tremble; thou hast broken it; heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh.*

The persecutions of the Israelitish church often shook the "land" of promise; the persecutions of the Christian church have frequently moved the whole earth. Afflictions of this kind may be likened to wounds sometimes made in a diseased body, by skilful surgeons, to be healed again, when, by a discharge of the corrupt humours, they have answered the end for which they were intended.

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3. *Thou hast showed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment,* or, *intoxication.*

The Israelites had not only suffered "hard things" from their professed enemies the Philistines, by the overthrow of Saul and his army, but their civil dissensions at home showed that they had drunk deep of the bitter cup of infatuation. See 1 Sam. xxxi. and 2 Sam. ii. and iii. From these two sources flow the calamities of churches and of kingdoms in all ages, whensoever it pleaseth God to visit their transgressions upon them by the instrumentality of men.

4. *Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.*

For the temporal salvation of Israel, God raised up David, according to his promise; to whose standard, as a centre of unity, the worshippers of the true God might resort. For the spiritual and eternal salvation of the church, God raised up his Son Jesus, according to his promise, and "displayed the banner "of the cross," under which believers are enlisted, and led on to triumph, "because of the truth." Remarkable to this purpose are the words of Isaiah; "In that day there shall be A ROOT OF JESSE, which "shall stand for an ENSIGN of the people; to it "shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest," after the battle is over, and the victory gained, "shall be glo-"rious." Isa. xi. 10.

5. *That thy beloved may be delivered, save* with *thy right hand, and hear me.*

This prayer, which king David preferred for Israel, the great Intercessor prefers continually for

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his church; and all ought to prefer for themselves and for others.

6. *God hath spoken in his holiness*, or, *by his Holy One, I will rejoice*, or, *exult*, i.e. *as a conqueror; I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.*

As a ground of hope and confidence, David here declares, that God, by the mouth of an holy prophet, had spoken and promised him the success for which he prayed in the foregoing verse. And that this was known among the people, appears from a speech of Abner to the elders of Israel, 2 Sam. iii. 18. "The Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By "the hand of my servant David I will save my "people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, "and out of the hand of all their enemies." Having, therefore, mentioned this prediction, much of which was already accomplished, he exults as a conqueror, resolving to divide into districts, and portion out under proper officers, the country about Samaria, now become his own.

7. *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my lawgiver.*

"Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim," and the other tribes of Israel, upon the death of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, whom Abner had set over them, joined the royal tribe of Judah, and came in, with one accord, to the house of David. See 2 Sam. ii. 8. and v. 1. "Ephraim," as a tribe abounding in valiant men, is styled by its prince, "the strength of his "head," or the support of his life and kingdom; and

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"Judah," as the seat of empire, replenished with men of wisdom and understanding, qualified to assist the throne by their salutary counsels, is dignified with the title of "lawgiver." Thus are the tribes of the spiritual "Israel" subject to Messiah, and serve him in various capacities, as the Spirit furnishes different men with different powers: some being endued with zeal and fortitude, to labour and suffer; others with knowledge and discretion, to instruct and govern.

8. *Moab* is *my washpot; over Edom will I cast out, or, extend, my shoe; Philistia, triumph thou because of me;* Heb. *over Philistia give a shout of triumph.* The parallel passage, Ps. cviii. 9. has it —*Over Philistia I will give a shout of triumph.*

After having mentioned the submission of the Israelitish tribes to his sceptre, David predicts the extension of his kingdom over the neighbouring nations, those inveterate enemies of the people of God; such as the Moabites, the Edomites, and, above all, the Philistines. The absolute reduction of these nations under his dominion, is expressed metaphorically, by the phrases of "making them his washpot, and extending his shoe, i. e. setting his foot," upon them. The Son of David also must "reign, till he hath put "all enemies under his feet:" 1 Cor. xv. 25. And the Christian, in these words, now declareth his hope of being enabled to do the same; to conquer through his Lord, and to triumph with him.

9. *Who will bring me* into *the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?*

Bozrah, the capital of Idumea, or "Edom," was

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a fortified town, situated on a rock, deemed impregnable. See Obad. ver. 3. Considering therefore the strength of the adversary, David, by this question, acknowledgeth his own impotency, and the need he had of superior aid, in order to achieve this important conquest. How great need, then, have we of an Almighty Saviour, who may enable us to overcome our last and strongest enemy, death! And it is very remarkable, that Christ's victory over this very enemy is set forth, by the prophet Isaiah, under the striking image of a king of Israel, returning in triumph from the reduction of Idumea. "Who is this, that cometh "from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah," &c. Isa. lxiii. 1. The reader will be no less entertained than instructed, by a discourse of bishop Andrews on this subject, being the seventeenth of his Sermons on Easter-day.

10. Wilt *not thou, O God,* which *hadst cast us off? and* thou, *O God,* which *didst not go out with our armies?*

The question in the last verse, "Who will bring "me into Edom?" is here answered by another question, "Wilt not thou, O God," &c. that is, To whom can we have recourse, for assistance, but to thee, O God? Deserted by thee, we fall; but do thou go forth with us, and we shall again rise superior to every enemy. So saith the Christian soldier: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words "of eternal life;" "Thou hast overcome the sharp-"ness of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven "to all believers."

11. *Give us help from trouble; for vain* is *the*

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help of man. 12. *Through God we shall do valiantly; for he* it is that *shall tread down our enemies.*

David, like a wise and pious prince, acknowledgeth the weakness of the fleshly arm, and strengthened himself in the Lord his God. Much more ought we to confess the impotence of nature, and to implore the succours of grace; that so we may happily accomplish our spiritual warfare, tread Satan under our feet, and triumph finally over the last enemy, death himself.

PSALM LXI.

ARGUMENT.

In the person of David, for a while driven into exile, and then restored to his kingdom, we here behold the church, or any member thereof, 1, 2, 3. preferring a petition for deliverance from the troubles and temptations of this mortal state; 4, 5. expressing faith and hope in God; 6, 7. praying for the prosperity and perpetuity of Messiah's kingdom; and, 8. resolving to praise God evermore for the same.

1. *Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.* 2. *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock* that *is higher than I.*

The church, extended far and wide among the nations, crieth aloud unto God, by the prayers of

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its members, even "from the end," or utmost parts, "of the earth." The world is to Christians a sea of troubles and temptations, from which they daily beseech God to deliver them, and to place them on the "rock" of their salvation; which rock is Christ. Grounded on him, by faith in his sufferings and exaltation, we may defy all the storms and tempests that can be raised against us by the adversary, while, as from the top of a lofty mountain on the shore, we behold the waves dashing themselves in pieces beneath us.

3. *For thou hast been a shelter for me,* and *a strong tower from the enemy.*

Meditation on God our Saviour, as set forth in the Scriptures, will ever prove, to the believer, "a "strong tower" or fortress, in which he will be safe from the darts of the enemy, and will be furnished with impregnable arguments, wherewith to oppose and blunt the force of every temptation which Satan can launch against his soul.

4. *I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.*

They who sojourn in the "tabernacle" of the church militant on earth, and continue faithful members of the same, shall take up their eternal residence in that permanent "temple," the church triumphant in heaven. Below, they are protected by the all-shadowing "wing" of God's fatherly providence; above, they will be rewarded with the all-illuminating vision of his glorious presence.

5. *For thou, O God, hast heard my vows; thou*

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hast given me *the heritage of those that fear thy name.*

The "vows" of David, made during his banishment, were heard, and he was restored to the possession of his kingdom, in that land which God had given to his people, for an "heritage." The vows of Messiah, made in the days of his pilgrimage, were heard, and he hath re-assumed his ancient throne in the heavenly Jerusalem. The prayers of the faithful, made in the land where they are in exile, are heard, and their spirits shall return to God, who will "give "them the heritage of those that fear his name."

6. *Thou wilt prolong the king's life;* and *his years as many generations.* 7. *He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth,* which *may preserve him.* Or, 6. *Thou wilt add days to the days of the king; his years as generation and generation.* 7. *He shall dwell before God for ever; mercy and truth shall preserve him.*

These words must be applied to Him, of whom it was said by the angel, "The Lord God shall give "unto him the throne of his father David; and he "shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and "of his kingdom there shall be no end:" Luke i. 32. The ancient church prayed for "his" exaltation and glory, under those of his representative; nay, the Chaldee paraphrast expounds this passage of Messiah only: "Thou shalt add days to the days "of King Messias; his years shall be as the genera-"tion of this world, and of the world to come." Nor can a better paraphrase be easily devised.

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8. *So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.*

For the preservation and prosperity, the exaltation, the power, and the everlasting glory of Christ's kingdom, with all the benefits and blessings thereof, we are bound to sing praise unto God's holy name for ever, and daily to perform the vows made in baptism, that we would believe in him, and serve him, all the days of our life; until the blessed day shall dawn, which no night is to follow, when faith shall end in vision, and duty be resolved into praise.

NINTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXII.

ARGUMENT.

This Psalm containeth, 1, 2. a resolution to trust in God alone; 3, 4. a denunciation of judgement against the persecutors of the Just One; 5—7. a repeated act of faith, and resolution to trust in God, with, 8. an exhortation to all nations to do the same; and that, 9, 10. because there is no confidence to be placed in man, or in the world; but only, 11. in the divine power, and, 12. mercy.

1. *Truly my soul waiteth*, or, *resteth, upon God: from him* cometh *my salvation.* 2. *He only* is *my rock, and my salvation;* he is *my defence,* Heb. *high place; I shall not be greatly moved.*

David, in the midst of trouble, and perhaps

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tempted to have recourse to sinful expedients for his preservation, determines still to repose all his confidence on the promised mercy of him who is the "salvation," the "rock," and the "high place," or fortress, of men. Christ would not be delivered from his sufferings, by any other means than those which the Father had ordained. The church, in like manner, should patiently wait for the salvation of God, and not attempt, through distrust of the divine mercy, to save herself by unwarrantable methods, of her own devising.

3. *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall* shall ye be, and as *a tottering fence.*

From a declaration of his trust in God, the Prophet passeth to an expostulation with his enemies, for continually plotting against him; and foretelleth, that their destruction will happen suddenly and irremediably, like the downfal of a wall that is out of the perpendicular, or a stone fence, the parts of which are not cemented together. See Isa. xxx. 13. How striking is this expostulation, and this prediction, if considered as addressed by Messiah to his implacable enemies!

4. *They only consult to cast* him *down from his excellency; they delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.*

The adversaries of David "consulted" how to deprive him of those honours to which God designed to exalt him; the Scribes and Pharisees took counsel against Jesus, with the same intent; and to rob the Christian of the glory and immortality prepared for

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him, is the end of every temptation which the enemy throws in his way, whether it be of the terrifying, or, which oftener succeeds, the flattering, alluring, and deceiving kind.

5. *My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.* 6. *He only is my rock and my salvation:* he is my *defence*, or, *high place; I shall not be moved.* 7. *In God is my salvation, and my glory; the rock of my strength*, and *my refuge*, is *in God.*

The consideration suggested in the preceding verse, namely, that the enemy is ever intent upon our ruin, should stir us up, after the Prophet's example, to renew our faith, and strengthen ourselves yet more and more, continually, in the Lord our God, who alone giveth victory, salvation, and glory.

8. *Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before him: God is a refuge for us.*

The comforts which David had found, he exhorteth others to seek, in faith and prayer; in such a faith as fixeth itself on God, when the whole world is against it; and such prayer, as poureth forth all the desires of the soul into the bosom of the Almighty. How often, in repeating the Psalms, do we declare, that "God is our refuge;" yet how very seldom do we recur to him, as such, in the hour of temptation!

9. *Surely men of low degree* are *vanity*, and *men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they* are *altogether* lighter *than vanity.*

A reason is here assigned, why we should at all times "trust in God;" namely, because there is

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nothing else, in which we can trust, but it will in the end deceive us. Weighed in the "balance" of heaven, the power of man to save, is "less than "nothing." Let us weigh every thing in that exact and faithful balance.

10. *Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart* upon them.

Of all things here below, wealth is that on which poor deluded man is chiefly tempted, even to the end of life, to place his confidence; and when "riches increase," it proves a hard task for the human heart to keep its affections sufficiently detached from them. But he who by injustice acquireth the earthly mammon, justly forfeiteth the treasures of heaven; and he who is made vain and covetous by money, however honestly gotten, renders that a curse to one, which was designed as a blessing to many, and drowns himself in the spring which should have watered all around him.

11. *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this,* or, *these two things have I heard; that power* belongeth *unto God.* 12. *Also unto thee, O* LORD, belongeth *mercy; for thou renderest to every man according to his work.*

In opposition to the vain boasts of worldly men, trusting in their riches, &c. is cited the declaration of God, when, from mount Sinai, he proclaimed himself to be JEHOVAH, the fountain of all "power," in heaven above, and on earth beneath, jealous of the glory of this attribute, ready to avenge himself on the wicked, and able to abase the pride of

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man. At the same time also, he proclaimed himself "the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long suf-"fering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keep-"ing mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and "transgression, and sin:" Exod. xxxiv. 6. To all mankind, therefore, the Prophet here recommendeth meditation on these two most interesting subjects, the "power" of God to punish sin, and his "mercy" to pardon it. Fear of the former will beget desire of the latter, and both together will set a man upon doing works worthy of their parent faith; works, which God, of his infinite "mercy," for the sake of Christ, has graciously promised to accept, and to "reward."

PSALM LXIII.

ARGUMENT.

David, in the wilderness of Judah, expresseth, 1, 2. his longing desire after the presence of God, and the divine pleasures of the sanctuary; 3—6. he blesseth and praiseth God both day and night, in the midst of affliction, and, 7, 8. declareth his faith to be immoveable; 9, 10. he predicteth the fate of the wicked, with, 11. the exaltation, triumph, and glory of Messiah, to be exhibited in his own. The whole Psalm is applicable to the circumstances of Christ in the flesh, and to those of his people in the world.

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1. *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2. To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.*

After the example of the persecuted David in the wilderness of Judah, and that of the afflicted Jesus upon earth, the true Christian dedicates to God "the sweet hour of prime;" he opens the eyes of his understanding, together with those of his body, and awakes, each morning, to righteousness. He arises, with an inextinguishable thirst after those comforts which the world cannot give; and has immediate recourse, by prayer, to the fountain of the water of life; ever longing to behold the divine power and glory, in the sanctuary above, of which he has been favoured with some glimpse in the services of the church below.

3. *Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*

"Life" is the greatest of earthly blessings, all others being included in it; "all that a man hath," saith Satan, "will he give for his life:" Job ii. 4. Not so the Psalmist. He knew a pearl of far greater price, namely, the "loving kindness" of Jehovah, on which is suspended not only the life which now is, but that which is to come. The sense of this loving kindness tuned the harp of the son of Jesse, and now tunes those of the spirits before the throne.

4. *Thus will I bless thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in thy name.*

"While we live," however wretched our condi-

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tion may be, we have an opportunity of obtaining pardon, grace, and glory; for which we ought, at all times, "to bless" God, "lifting up pure hands" in prayer, employing them in every good work, and all in the "name" of Jesus.

5. *My soul shall be satisfied as* with *marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise* thee *with joyful lips: 6. When I remember thee upon my bed,* and *meditate on thee in the* night *watches.*

Solitude and stillness render the "night watches" a fit season for meditation on the so often experienced mercies of God; which, when thus called to remembrance, become a delicious repast to the spirit, filling it with all joy, and peace, and consolation; giving songs in the night, and making darkness itself cheerful. How cheerful, then, will be that last morning, when the righteous, awaking up after the divine likeness, shall be "satisfied" with all the fullness of God, and "praise him with joyful lips," in those eternal courts, where there is no night, and from whence sorrow and sighing fly far away!

7. *Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.*

Recollection of past mercies inclines the soul to put herself under the "wing" of an all-shadowing Providence. Should her Redeemer, for a time, seem to be deserting her, faith constraineth her to "follow "hard after him," as a child doth after the father; and not to let go the "hand" which hath so often "upholden" her from falling.

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9. *But those* that *seek my soul to destroy* it, *shall go into the lower parts of the earth.* 10. *They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.*

The enemies of Jehovah, and his Anointed, if they come not to a violent death, an early grave, or to have their carcases devoured by the beasts of the field (as hath sometimes been the case), yet in an after-state, their condition will certainly be deplorable. Their habitation must be in the "pit;" their punishment, the flaming "sword" of almighty vengeance; and their companions, those crafty and malicious ones, who, having contributed to seduce, will help to torment them.

11. *But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.*

If David found cause to rejoice in God, who gave him the victory over all his enemies; if the subjects of David might well glory in their king; if the slanderers of David were put to silence, at beholding him exalted to the throne of Israel; how much greater is the joy of Messiah in the Godhead, giving the manhood victory over his enemies, sin, death, and hell; how much rather may his subjects and worshippers glory in their triumphant King; and how much more shall the blasphemers of such a Saviour be everlastingly confounded, when they shall behold him invested with all the power and majesty of the Father, and seated on the throne of judgement! Surely, THEN, "the mouth of them that "speak lies shall be stopped."

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PSALM LXIV.

ARGUMENT.

David, in the person of Messiah, 1, 2. prayeth to be delivered from his enemies, from their counsels and insurrections; 3, 4. he describeth their calumnies and slanders, their scoffs and blasphemies, and, 5, 6. their indefatigable malice; predicting, 7—9. their astonishing fall, with, 10. the exaltation of the church, in God her Saviour.

1. *Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer; preserve my life from fear of the enemy.*

The Prophet, after beseeching God to hear him, prefers his petition, which is, to be "preserved from "fear of the enemy." A petition of this kind is granted either by a removal of the ground of fear, when the enemy's power to hurt is taken from him, or his will changed; or else, by an extirpation of the fear itself, through the increase of faith, charity and fortitude. For the former let us pray conditionally, "if it may be done, and if it is God's will that it "should be done," as Christ prayed against the bitter cup in the garden; for the latter we may pray absolutely; since a victory, gained by the fear of God over the fear of man, is a necessary step, and a happy prelude, to a full and final triumph over every enemy of our salvation.

2. *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity.*

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The "counsels and insurrections" of the Israelites against David; of the same people, afterwards, against the Son of David; of worldly and wicked men against the church; and of the powers of darkness against us all, are here, respectively, understood to be deprecated.

3. *Who whet their tongue like a sword*, and *bend* their bows to shoot *their arrows*, even *bitter words*: 4. *That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.*

In personal scoffings and revilings, the tongue performs the part of a "sword," which is a weapon that can be used only in open rencounters: but "bitter "words," spoken in secret, and at a distance from him who is the subject of them, are like "arrows," which may be shot from an obscure and remote corner, and therefore cannot be warded off. The tongue, in both these capacities, was employed against that PERFECT ONE, the holy Jesus, in the days of his flesh. Would to God it had never been since employed against him and his disciples, or by his disciples against each other!

5. *They encourage themselves in an evil matter; they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?*

Sin doth not often appear abroad without a veil; and the more atrocious the sin, the more specious must be the pretence which is to cover it. Envy and malice crucified the Son of God; but, during the course of the proceedings against him, you hear only of zeal for the law, and loyalty to Cæsar. Such are the "snares," set by the crafty, to deceive the

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simple and unwary; without considering that the broad eye of heaven, all the time, surveys their most secret devices, by which they impose upon others, and frequently upon themselves.

6. *They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward* thought *of every one of* them, *and the heart,* is *deep.*

Truth and righteousness may be found, and practised, with half the pains that are often employed to "search out iniquity," and establish error. The Jews could not accomplish the death of Christ, without counsels, stratagems, and subornations, "deep" and dark as hell itself: all which trouble they might have saved themselves at once, by believing on him. The case is the same with virtue and vice; and honesty is the readiest, as well as the best, policy.

7. *But God shall shoot at them* with *an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.* 8. *So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.*

While the enemies of the "Just One" were shooting in secret at him, he that dwelleth in the heavens was levelling an arrow at them, and one which would not fail to take place. It accordingly did so; and the direful imprecations of "their own tongues fell," in unexampled vengeance, on the heads of them, and their children, who continued to justify the deeds of their fathers. All would "flee away" from the punishment of Jerusalem; let all, then, depart from the sins which occasioned it.

9. *And all men shall fear, and shall declare the*

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work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

It is remarkable that the desolation of the once holy and beloved city filled "all men with fear" and astonishment, forcing them to acknowledge and "declare" it to be the "work of God." Even Titus, the Roman emperor, confessed, that he had fought, and conquered, by the favour, and under the direction, of Heaven. O that men would "wisely consider" of this, and other wonderful works of the Almighty!

10. *The righteous shall be glad in the* LORD, *and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*

As sorrow, sooner or later, will be the portion of Messiah's enemies, so joy is the high privilege of his friends and disciples. The "righteous" man alone can be truly "glad," because he alone can be glad "in the Lord" Jesus, the object of all his confidence. There was light in Goshen, when darkness covered the Egyptians; the Christian church drank the cup of salvation, when that of vengeance was mingled for Jerusalem; and when the empire of Satan shall fall, heaven will resound with hallelujahs.

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TWELFTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXV.

ARGUMENT.

In this very lovely song of Sion, the Prophet treats, 1. of the praise due to Jehovah, for, 2. his mercy in hearing the prayers of his servants, and, 3. in redeeming them from their sins; 4. he declareth the blessedness of the elect in Christ their head; 5. predicteth the wonderful things which God would do for the salvation of men, by that power which, 6, 7. established the mountains, and confined the sea within its bounds; 8. foretelleth the conversion of the nations; and, 91—3. describeth the blessed effects of the Spirit poured out upon the church, under the figure of rain, descending upon a dry ground.

1. *Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion; and unto thee shall the vow be performed.*

The oblations of "praise and thanksgiving" were formerly offered, and all "vows" were paid, in the temple on mount "Sion." At Jerusalem was performed the promise of man's redemption by the sacrifice of the Son of God; since which event, and the call of the Gentiles, the Christian church has been the holy city and temple. In our communion, we are to offer up our devotions, and to perform the

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vow made in baptism; until we come to the heavenly Sion, to pay our vows, with the church triumphant, in everlasting hymns of praise.

2. *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.*

The Prophet here foretels, that, on account of God's mercy, in hearing the prayers of his people, "all flesh," that is, all mankind, out of every nation, should "come" at his gracious call, and make their supplications before him in his church. And to whom should "all flesh come," but to him that "heareth "prayer?"

3. *Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*

The chief subject of the prayers, made by all flesh to God, is the forgiveness of sin; in order to which it must be confessed. The verse, therefore, consisteth of two parts. First, an acknowledgement of guilt, "Iniquities prevail against me;" like whereunto is St. Paul's complaint, "O wretched man that I am; "who shall deliver me from this body of death!" The second part of the verse intimates an assurance of pardon, through the blood of the Lamb, "As for "our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away;" exactly corresponding to the answer, which the apostle returneth to himself; "I thank God, through "Jesus Christ our Lord:" Rom. vii. 25.

4. *Blessed* is the man whom *thou choosest, and causest to approach* unto thee, that *he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,* even *of thy holy temple.*

Blessed are they who are chosen out of the world,

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and admitted to the privileges of the church; still more blessed are they, who are chosen out of the congregation to stand continually in the presence of God, and to minister in his courts; but blessed, above all blessing and praise, is the man Christ Jesus, elect, precious, chosen of God to be an high priest for ever; to make intercession for his people in the courts of heaven; that where he is, they may be also. Then shall we indeed be satisfied with the "pleasures of thy house, O Lord, even of thy holy "temple."

5. By *terrible*, or, *wonderful, things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation;* who art *the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off* upon *the sea.*

The ancient church foretelleth, that God would "answer" her prayers for the coming of Messiah, "by wonderful things in righteousness;" which was brought to pass, by the death and resurrection of Christ, the overthrow of idolatry, and the conversion of the nations. Then "the God of salvation" became "the confidence of all the ends of the earth," and the inhabitants of the most distant "island" believed in Jesus. By "wonderful things in righteous-"ness," will the prayers of the church, which now is, be answered at the second manifestation of the Son of God, in the glory of his Father.

6. *Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains;* being *girded with power: 7. Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.*

That power which originally fixed the foundations

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of the "mountains," and which, from time to time, controls the "waves" of the sea, is engaged in the support and preservation of the church; and will never suffer the "waves" of this troublesome world to overwhelm the "mountain of his holiness."

8. *They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens; thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.*

The "tokens," or signs, mentioned in this verse, are the exertions of divine power and mercy, called above, "wonderful things in righteousness;" which, at the publication of the Gospel, produced a saving "fear" of God among the nations, "dwelling in the "uttermost parts of the earth." "The isles," saith Isaiah on the same occasion, "saw it, and feared; "the ends of the earth were afraid; they drew near "and came:" Isa. xli. 5. And then it was, that "the outgoings of the morning and evening," all the inhabitants of the earth, as many as experienced the sweet vicissitudes of day and night, of morning and evening, were "made to rejoice" in God their Saviour; whose name was praised, from the rising to the setting sun.

9. *Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God,* which *is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it;* or, *for so thou hast established,* or, *constituted, it.*

Under the beautiful image of a once barren and dry land, rendered fruitful by kindly showers of rain, turning dearth into plenteousness, are represented here (as in Isa. xxxv. and numberless other places)

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the gracious "visitation" of the church by the Spirit; the "riches" of grace and mercy, poured upon the hearts of men, from the exhaustless "river of God;" and the bountiful provision made thereby, for the relief of that spiritual famine which had been sore in all lands. See Isa. lv. 10. Rev. xxii. 1. Amos viii. 11.

10. *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.*

After the ground is ploughed up, the former rain, descending upon the "ridges," and into the "furrows," dissolveth the parts of the earth, and so fitteth it for the purpose of vegetation, whenever the seed shall be cast into it: then cometh the latter rain, to assist, and to "bless the springing" and increase thereof, unto a joyful harvest. Thus doth the good Spirit of God both prepare the hearts of his people for the reception of the word, and also enable them to bear fruit, bringing forth "some an hundred fold, "some sixty, some thirty." Matt. xiii. 23.

11. *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths*, or, *clouds*, or, *heavens, drop fatness.*

The herbs, fruits, and flowers, produced by the earth, are here finely represented, as a beautifully variegated "crown," set upon her head, by the hands of her great Creator; at whose command, the heavens, by collecting and distilling the drops of rain, impregnate her, and make her the parent of terrestrial blessings. It is the same God who will crown with everlasting goodness the acceptable year, the year of his redeemed; when the Spirit shall have

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accomplished his work; when God shall be glorified in his saints; and heaven, as well as earth, shall be full of the goodness of Jehovah.

12. *They drop* upon *the pastures of the wilderness; and the little hills rejoice on every side;* or, *are girded about with gladness.*

As the rain, which descendeth from heaven, causeth even the barren wilderness to become a green pasture, and investeth the naked hills with the garments of joy and gladness; so the Spirit, when poured out from on high upon the Gentile world, converted that "wilderness" into a "fruitful field;" while the churches, there rising on all sides, like little fertile "hills, rejoiced" with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. See Isa. xxxii. 15. xxxv. 1, 2.

13. *The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys are also covered over with corn: they shout for joy, they also sing.*

The happy effects of God's visiting the earth with rain, are valleys covered with corn, verdant meads, and thriving flocks. All these ideas in the prophetical Scriptures, are frequently transferred to the times of refreshment and consolation, of peace and fruitfulness, in the church; which breaks forth into joy, in the one case, as the world is always ready to do, in the other. Manifold and marvellous, O Lord, are thy works, whether of nature or of grace; surely, in wisdom and loving kindness hast thou made them all; the earth, in every sense, is full of thy riches!

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PSALM LXVI.

ARGUMENT.

In this Psalm the Prophet, 1, 2. exciteth all the world to sing the praises of God; 3, 4. the power and universality of his kingdom; 5—12. the deliverance of the church from various afflictions and temptations; for which, 13—15. we are to offer the sacrifices which had been vowed; 16—19. to declare the mercies and loving kindnesses of the Lord towards us; and, 20. to bless his holy name continually.

1. *Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands,* or, *all the earth:* 2. *Sing forth the honour of his name; make his praise glorious.*

"The holy church, throughout all the world," is here called upon to lift up her voice, like the jubilee trumpet of old, in thanksgiving; to celebrate that NAME, which is above every name; and to make the praise of JESUS glorious, both by word and deed; that so others, hearing our voices, and seeing our works, may be led to glorify him, in like manner.

3. *Say unto God, How terrible* art thou in *thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.*

The subjects proposed are the various and awful manifestations of divine "power;" of that power which made, and which continues to support, the

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world; which overthrows, and raises up, empires; which subverted the kingdom of Satan, established that of Christ, and caused its enemies either to relinquish, or dissemble, their hostility. Happy the man, whose heart and affections unfeignedly "submit themselves" to the sceptre of Messiah!

4. *All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name.*

What David spake in the future, the church now speaketh in the present, tense—"All the earth doth "worship thee, the Father everlasting—Day by day "we magnify thee; and we worship thy name ever "world without end." A day is coming when this shall be the case, in an unlimited sense of the words; when Jews and Gentiles, quick and dead, heaven and earth, shall compose one perfect and truly harmonious choir.

5. *Come, and see the works of God: he is terrible* in his *doing toward the children of men.* 6. *He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.*

The Prophet, after inviting men to contemplate "the works of God," sets before them, for that purpose, two great miracles wrought for Israel; namely, the division of the Red Sea, and that of the river Jordan; by the former they escaped Egypt, by the latter they entered Canaan. Under these two figurative transactions, the Christian church beholds, and, in the words which describe them, she celebrates, two corresponding works of mercy wrought for her; namely, the deliverance of her children from the dominion of sin, by the waters of baptism; and their

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admission into the kingdom of heaven, through the grave and gate of death. If the Israelites rejoiced in God their Saviour, for the former blessings, much more, surely, ought we so to do, for the latter.

7. *He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious, or, the rebellious shall not, exalt themselves.*

The uncontrollable sovereignty, and superintending providence, of our God and King, are topics on which we should ever delight to dwell. Establish, O Lord, thy kingdom within us, and suffer not our "rebellious" passions to "exalt themselves" against it.

8. *O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:* 9. *Who holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.*

But chiefly are we bound to "bless" and "praise" God, for that goodness and mercy, by which our feet are turned back from the ways of death, placed in the path of "life," and enabled to walk therein, without falling into perdition; until, having finished our pilgrimage in the world, we lie down in peace, and our flesh resteth sweetly in hope.

10. *For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.*

Notwithstanding the mercy of God, and the salvation wrought for us, we are here taught to expect affliction and tribulation; which indeed are oftentimes necessary; for, having in our composition a mixture of the earth from whence we came, with a base alloy of concupiscence, we stand as much in need of adversity, as metals, in like circumstances, do of the

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fire, to refine and purify our tempers. Try us, O God; but enable us to stand the trial!

11. *Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.* 12. *Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; but thou broughtest us into a wealthy* place.

Various calamities are here mentioned, which God suffers to fall upon his people. As first, their being "brought into the net," or ensnared and taken captive by their enemies, whom they had not power to resist or escape. Secondly, "affliction upon the "loins," or hard servitude under heavy burdens. Thirdly, "men riding over their heads," or the manifold oppressions of persecuting tyrants, trampling them under their feet, like war-horses in the day of battle. Fourthly, passing "through fire and water," or troubles of different and contrary kinds, though alike deadly and destructive. But he who brought Israel from among the brick-kilns of Egypt and through the waters of the Red Sea, and the river Jordan, into the promised rest, will bring us safely through every fiery trial, and through the waves of a troublesome world, to the land of everlasting peace and comfort.

13. *I will go into thine house with burnt offerings; I will pay thee my vows,* 14. *Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.* 15. *I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats.*

Under the Gospel, the obligation of "going to "the house of God," and there "paying vows,"

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still continues; but the "offerings" are changed. The legal sacrifices have been abolished by the oblation of the body of Christ once for all. This oblation is commemorated in the eucharist; at the celebration of which, we now offer up our prayers and praises, ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice, acceptable to God, in the name and through the merits of the Redeemer. These offerings, if vowed in the seasons of sickness and sorrow, should be paid in the days of health and gladness.

16. *Come* and *hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.*

Every man should be ready, like David, to celebrate the mercies of God vouchsafed to him. It is a debt of gratitude to his Saviour, who is glorified; and a debt of charity to his brethren, who are edified thereby; provided only, that it be done with sobriety and humility.

17. *I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.*

The mean by which we obtain salvation, is faith; which, as it showeth us both our disease and our physician, inclineth us to pray to the latter for a cure of the former. Prayer is one gift of God; and every other gift is obtained by it.

18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the* LORD *will not hear* me.

The prayer, which is "heard," is the prayer of the penitent, heartily grieved and wearied with sin, hating, and longing to be delivered from it. For God heareth not hypocrites, who, while they out-

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wardly disavow, yet inwardly "regard" and cherish "iniquity;" from which every one, who nameth the name of Christ, ought to depart.

19. But *verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.*

David was heard, when God delivered him from his enemies, and set him on the throne of Israel: Christ was heard, when God raised him from the dead, and exalted him to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens: and every man is heard, when God raises him from sin to righteousness, as an earnest of his future resurrection from dust to glory. Let every such man praise the Lord, and say, with David, in the last verse of our Psalm,

20. *Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*

PSALM LXVII.

ARGUMENT.

In this evangelical Psalm, the Israelitish church is introduced as partly praying for, and partly foretelling, the advent of Christ, and the conversion of the nations, with the joy and gladness that should be consequent thereupon. The Christian church now uses, and will continue to use, the Psalm, with propriety, until the fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in, the conversion of the Jews effected, and Christ shall appear the second time, finally to accomplish the salvation of his chosen.

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1. *God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us.*

The Israelitish church, by the mouth of the Prophet, expresseth her ardent desire after Messiah's advent, and appearance in the flesh; she prayeth, that God would be "merciful unto her," as he had promised; that, by so doing, he would "bless" her with the blessings of pardon and peace, of grace and glory; and, in one word, that he would "cause his "face to shine upon her" by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, making her to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, reviving her with the glad tidings of the Gospel, and enlightening her with the light of salvation.

2. *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.*

Nor was she studious, as her degenerate children have since been, to confine the favour of heaven within her own pale. If she had a good wish for herself, she had one likewise for others; and therefore prayed, that the "way" to life eternal might be "known," not in Jewry alone, but over all the "earth;" and that the virtues of that salutary medicine, which was able to restore health and vigour to the diseased and languishing spirits of men, might be published "among all nations."

3. *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.*

As if she had said—Hitherto, indeed, blessed Lord, thou hast thought fit to make me the guardian and keeper of that great deposit, thy true religion,

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from which the nations revolted, and fell; but the time is coming, when, by the Gospel of thy dear Son, they shall again be called to the knowledge of thee. Thy glory, impatient, as it were, of any longer restraint, and demanding a larger sphere, shall diffuse itself, like the light of heaven, to the ends of the world. Hasten, then, O hasten the dawning of that happy day, when congregations of converted Gentiles shall every where lift up their voices, and, perhaps in the words of this very Psalm, sing to thy praise and glory!

4. *O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.*

And a very sufficient cause, surely, is here assigned, why the "nations" should "be glad, and sing "for joy" upon the erection of Messiah's kingdom in the midst of them; namely, because he would "judge the people righteously;" breaking the yoke of the oppressor, and the iron rod of the prince of this world; becoming himself an advocate in the cause of his church; introducing her into the glorious liberty of the children of God, whose service is perfect freedom; and, with a sceptre, around which justice and mercy are wreathed together, "governing the nations upon earth."

5. *Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.* Chorus repeated, as above, ver. 3.

6. Then *shall the earth yield her increase;* and *God,* even *our own God, shall bless us.*

Then, when that long-expected time shall arrive,

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"the earth shall yield her increase;" the nations of the world shall be converted to the faith, and become fruitful in every good word and work, through the benediction of heaven upon them *.

7. *God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.*

The evangelical "blessings," predicted in this Psalm, have been long since poured out upon "the "ends of the earth," by the bountiful hand of God in Christ. Let us beseech him to add yet this to all his other mercies, that, in return for such unmerited favours, the redeemed may have grace evermore to pay him the tribute of fear and obedience, of duty and love.

THIRTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

This beautiful, sublime, and comprehensive, but very difficult, Psalm, is one of those which the church has appointed to be used on Whit-sunday. It seems evidently to have been composed on that festive and joyful occasion, the removal of the ark to mount Sion. See 2 Sam. vi. 1 Chron. xv. †

* Universæ gentes ad Deum convertentur, et electi abundabunt bonis operibus, rerumque omnium copiâ. BOSSUET.

† The argument seems to be, a prognostication of success to David and the kingdom of Israel, and victory over their enemies,

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Under this figure, David, foreseeing the exaltation of Messiah, speaks of him, whom he describes, 1, 2. as arising, and vanquishing his enemies; 3—6. as causing the faithful to rejoice, and showing mercy to the afflicted; 7—15. as bringing his church out of bondage, supporting her in the world by the Word and the Spirit, purging away her corruptions, and subduing her adversaries; the groundwork being laid in the history of the Egyptian deliverance, the Manna and the Law given in the wilderness, and the overthrow of the Canaanitish nations. 16—20. David returns to the scene before him, celebrates the ascension of Christ with power and great glory, to the heavenly Sion, and the gifts he should from thence pour down upon men; 21—23. foretels the vengeance he would take on his opposers; 24—28. sets forth

in consequence of the manifestation of the especial presence of God on mount Sion, and by his power exerted in their favour. In the mystical sense, which is authorized by St. Paul, Eph. iv. 8. it is, according to Vitringa, "Ascensio Christi in cœlos, et "sessio ad dextram Patris, et illius effecta, quæ sunt collectio "et conservatio ecclesiæ, ac destructio hostium sibi et eccle-"siæ adversorum." Bishop Lowth, in Merrick's Annotations. Dr. Chandler, in his "Critical History of the Life of David," has given an admirable exposition of the literal, or historical, sense of this Psalm, and a very ingenious division of it into five parts, founded on the supposition of its being performed at the removal of the ark. The author has been greatly assisted, in the ensuing comment, by the Doctor's exposition, and the reader will find the division of the Psalm inserted.

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the order of the church in her services; 29—31. predicts the conversion of the nations; all of whom, 32—35. he exhorts to unite in chanting forth the praises of their God and Saviour.

1. *Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him, flee before him.*

These words were used by Moses, whenever the ark set forward before the armies of Israel, in their progress toward Canaan: Numb. x. 35. David, in like manner, uses them in this triumphal hymn, on the removal of the ark to the city of Zion: 1 Chron. xiii. and xv. Dr. Chandler supposes this part of the Psalm, from ver. 1. to ver. 6. inclusive, to have been sung, when the ark was taken up on the shoulders of the Levites. The church now celebrates, in the same terms, the substance of the foregoing shadows; she sings the praises of her Redeemer, rising from the dead, and preceding the Israel of God, to the true land of promise; when "his enemies," the powers of darkness, sin, and death, "were scattered, and they that hated him fled before "him." And the Christian in the hour of temptation, will always find this verse a most powerful and profitable ejaculation.

2. *As smoke is driven away,* so *drive* them *away; as wax melteth before the fire,* so *let the wicked perish at the presence of God.*

The sudden and utter destruction of the enemies of God, and of his people, is resembled, first, to the dissipation of "smoke," which, though it rises from the earth in black and tremendous clouds, is by the

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wind presently brought to nothing; secondly, to the melting of "wax," which though, to appearance, of a firm and solid consistence, yet, when held to the fire for a few minutes, dissolves, and makes no more resistance. So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, within us. Let our vain imaginations be dispersed before thy Spirit, and our corruptions melt and die away, at the presence of thy light and thy truth.

3. *But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.*

A variety of expressions is used in the Hebrew, to denote the festive "joy" and "delight" with which the righteous celebrate the triumphs of their God over his and their enemies, under each dispensation respectively. When the heart is full of these sensations, it has no desire to resort to the world for pleasure.

4. *Sing unto God, sing praises unto his name; extol him that rideth upon the heavens, by his name* JAH, *and rejoice before him.*

The Prophet exhorts the people of God to magnify, with psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, the eternal and incommunicable "name" of him "who was, and is, and is to come:" who, deriving being from none, gives it to all; and who, as Redeemer of his people, is exalted above the "heavens," and all the powers therein; above the gods of the nations; acknowledged and glorified by saints and angels; feared and trembled at by ungodly men, and evil spirits *.

* The idea of "riding on the heavens," furnished by our translation, is here followed, because לרכב בשמים in the 33d verse, seems to be exactly parallel. But bishop Lowth, Mr. Merrick,

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5. *A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows,* is *God in his holy habitation.*

After a description of God's "majesty," the Psalmist proceeds to make mention of his "mercy" towards the afflicted Israelites, who had suffered so much, in Egypt, and in the wilderness. The cause of the "fatherless and widow" he takes into his own hands. But never did he do this in so full and extensive a manner, as when, by becoming man, he betrothed the church to himself in righteousness, and became a father to her fatherless children.

6. *God setteth the solitary in families; he bringeth out those which are bound in chains; but the rebellious dwell in a dry* land.

The "solitary," or destitute, in this verse, are the same persons with the "fatherless and widow," in the foregoing; those, as Dr. Chandler observes, whose fathers and families had been destroyed in Egypt, or fallen in the wilderness; who, therefore, were left alone, destitute of help. These God afterwards "made to sit down in families," blessed them with a numerous progeny, and the peaceable enjoyment of domestic felicity. Thus hath since been manifested the same tender care of Heaven, in calling home the wretched outcasts among the nations, and admitting them into the holy and happy family of the children

and Dr. Chandler render כלו לרכב בערבות, "'Prepare the way "for him who rideth through the deserts," i. e. who rode upon the cherubim, through the wilderness; alluding to the passage of the ark. This construction seems most agreeable to the common usage of the words employed in the original. Either way, the idea is truly great and sublime.

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of God. Another instance of God's mercy, mentioned in this verse, is that he "bringeth out those "which are bound with chains," delivering his people from a spiritual, as he once did Israel from a temporal bondage. "But the rebellious," the ungodly and impenitent, "dwell in a dry land," in a spiritual desert, where no waters of life, of comfort, and salvation, flow. Such is the state of the rebellious Jews at this day, like that of their murmuring predecessors in the wilderness. This allusion, says bishop Lowth, to the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, and the destruction of the murmurers in the desert, brings in, with great ease, the full subjects of the exodus, in the next verse.

7. *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people; when thou didst march through the wilderness:* 8. *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God;* even *Sinai itself* was moved *at the presence of God, the God of Israel.*

This part of the Psalm, from ver. 7. to ver. 14. is the second, in Dr. Chandler's division. It is supposed to have been sung when the procession began, and to have lasted till mount Sion was in view. The Prophet goes back to commemorate the wonders wrought for Israel, when Jehovah, by his presence in the cloudy pillar, conducted them through the wilderness: when, descending to deliver the law, he bowed the heavens, and shook the earth, and caused Sinai to quake from its foundations. The Christian church, singing this Psalm on the day of Pentecost, commemorates, under these terms and figures, her redemption from the spiritual Egypt, by the resur-

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rection of Jesus, with mighty signs and wonders, and the succeeding delivery of the new law from mount Sion, after the descent of the Holy Spirit; by which the old Jewish dispensation was shaken and removed, to make way for one that should last for ever. See Heb. xii. 18—28.

9. *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful,* Heb. *a free, liberal,* or, *gracious, rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.*

As the heavens, at the command of God, rained down manna, &c. to strengthen and refresh the well-nigh famished people, in the wilderness; so, by the descent of the Spirit from above, bringing with him the word of life, the church, in her infant and languid state, was mightily confirmed and invigorated.

10. *Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.*

In the former verse, the Psalmist tells us, that God hath confirmed, refreshed, and revived, his inheritance, by the plentiful, and as it were voluntary, showers of bread and flesh, that he rained down upon them. In these words, Dr. Chandler apprehends, he speaks of the manner, as well as abundance of the food thus given them; and renders the verse thus—"חיהך, Thy food," or, "As to thy food," the food which thou gavest them, "ישבו בה They dwelt in "the midst of it; thou didst prepare, O God, by thy "goodness, for the poor." Thus the history informs us, that the manna covered by the dew "lay round "about the host;" and that the quails were "let fall "by the camp, about a day's journey on one side,

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"and a day's journey on the other, round about the "camp:" Exod. xvi. 13. Numb. xi. 31. This was literally "dwelling in the midst of the food God had "provided them." By the ministration of the word and sacraments, in the Christian church, the true manna, the bread which cometh down, with the dew of God's blessing, from heaven, is continually furnished, for the nourishment of those who "hunger "and thirst after righteousness." It "falls round "about the camp," and, "as to this thy food, O "God," we, thy favoured people, have the happiness to "dwell in the midst of it:" thus "thou hast "prepared, of thy goodness, for the poor in spirit."

11. *The* LORD *gave the word; great* was *the company of those that published* it.

He who supplied his people with food in the wilderness, enabled them likewise to vanquish the numerous enemies that opposed them in their passage through it, the Amalekites, the Amorites, the Midianites, the Moabites, &c. With respect to all these enemies, "the Lord gave the word." The Israelites engaged them, by his order, see Numb. xxi. 34. xxv. 17. and, under his conduct and blessing, obtained the victory over them. When the enemies of man's salvation were vanquished by the resurrection of Christ, and the Heathen nations were to own his power, again "the Lord gave the word." It was published, at first, by apostles, confessors, and martyrs, and hath been since published continually, by all the churches, who celebrate in their services the victories of their Redeemer; as in old time, prophets and prophetesses, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Deborah, and others, with

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the armies of Israel, sang triumphal songs, on occasion of temporal, but figurative conquests.

12. * *Kings with their armies did flee apace:* Heb: *fled away, fled away: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.*

When God, by the hand of Moses and his successor Joshua, led his people, through the wilderness, into the land of promise, the kings of Canaan, with their mighty hosts, were discomfited; and the women of Israel, who "tarried at home, divided the spoil" of their vanquished enemies. After the conquest of the Midianites, as Dr. Chandler observes, God ordered the prey to be divided between them who went out on that expedition, and the rest of the congregation who continued in their tents: Numb. xxxi. 27. Thus, in the spiritual war, apostles, confessors, and martyrs, went out to the battle, fought and conquered; while the benefits of the victory extended to thousands and millions, who, without being exposed to their conflicts and torments, have enjoyed the fruit of their labours.

13. *Though ye have lien among the pots,* yet shall ye be as *the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.*

By "lying among the pots †," or in "dust and

* Bishop Lowth thinks, with Dr. Hammond, that this verse was the Song, sung by the choir, mentioned in the verse preceding. Dr. Chandler adds the next verse to it.

† My worthy and learned friend, Mr. Parkhurst, in his Hebrew Lexicon, gives the following account of the word שפתים (derived from שפה, to put or set any thing in order)—ROWS of stones "on which the caldrons or pots were placed. Lying among

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"ashes," is evidently denoted a state of affliction and wretchedness, like that of Israel in Egypt, which was exchanged for one of the utmost dignity and splendour, in Canaan; one as different from the former, as a caldron, discoloured by smoke and soot, is from the bright and beautiful plumage of an eastern dove, glistering interchangeably, as with silver and gold. Thus the church of Christ emerged from a state of persecution and tribulation, into one of splendour and magnificence. And such is the change made in the spiritual condition of any man, when he passes from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; he is invested with the robe of righteousness, and adorned with the graces of the Spirit of holiness.

14. *When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was* white *as snow in Salmon.*

The purport of this difficult verse seems to be, that all was white as snow, *i. e.* all was brightness, joy, and festivity, about mount Salmon, בצלמון תשלג when the Almighty, fighting for his people Israel, vanquished their enemies, בה, in or about that part of the country.

15. *The hill of God* is as *the hill of Bashan; an high hill,* as *the hill of Bashan.*

When the ark came in view of mount Sion, the place of its fixed residence for the future, and probably when they began to ascend it, Dr. Chandler

"these denotes the most abject slavery; for this was the place "of rest allotted to the vilest slaves." So our translators render it, in the margin of Ezek. xl. 43. Dr. Chandler adopts the same interpretation of the word.

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apprehends, this and the two following verses were sung. And if these words be read with an interrogation, he conceives they will appear suitable to the occasion, and worthy of the genuine spirit of poetry. "The hill of God," that hill which God hath chosen to inhabit, "is it the hill of Bashan, the hill with "its craggy eminences, the hill of Bashan?" Bashan may boast of its proud eminence, its high summits; but is that the hill where God will fix his residence? The Prophet speaks of Bashan with contempt and disdain, in comparison of Sion. And this agrees well with what immediately follows—

16. *Why leap ye,* or, *why look ye askance with envy, ye high hills? This is the hill* which *God desireth to dwell in; yea, the* LORD *will abide* in it *for ever.*

The Psalmist, in commemorating God's former mercies and loving kindnesses, having been led to mention the towering hills of Salmon and Bashan, by a masterly transition, suddenly resumes his original subject, with a beautiful apostrophe to those mountains, letting them know, that however proudly they might lift up their heads above the rest, or, in the language of poetry, "look askance with envy" on mount Sion, yet this was the mount, which Jehovah had determined to honour with his special presence; thither he was now ascending, with the ark of his strength; and there, between the cherubims, in the place prepared for him, he would "dwell for ever;" till the whole dispensation would be at an end, till the glory of the Lord should be revealed in human nature; till God should be manifest in the flesh, and

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the true tabernacle and temple should succeed the typical. After that, the privileges of Sion were transferred to the Christian church; she became, and, while the world lasts, will continue to be, the "hill in which God delighteth to dwell:" she will therefore be justly entitled to the pre-eminence over all that may seem to be great and glorious in the world.

17. *The chariots of God* are *twenty thousand,* even *thousands of angels,* or, *thousands repeated: the* LORD is *among them* as in *Sinai, in the holy* place, or, *Sinai is in the sanctuary.*

The Psalmist, in the preceding verse, had declared Sion to be the habitation of Jehovah. In this verse is described the majesty and magnificence of his appearance there, as a mighty conqueror of the enemies of his people, riding upon the cherubim, as in a triumphal chariot, with all the hosts of heaven, as it were in his retinue. Thus God descended on Sinai, with the fire, the cloud, and the glory; thus he manifested himself when taking possession of "the "holy place" prepared for him in Sion; 2 Chron. v. 13.; and in some such manner we may suppose king Messiah to have entered heaven at his ascension, when he went up in the clouds, with power and great glory, and all the attendant spirits joined his train, rejoicing to minister to their Lord, and increase the pomp and splendour of that glorious day.

18. *Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea,* for *the rebellious also, that the* LORD *God might dwell* among them.

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When the ark had ascended mount Sion, and was deposited in the place assigned for it, the singers are supposed, by Dr. Chandler, to have proceeded with this part of the Psalm, in which they celebrate the ascension of their God and King, by the symbol of his presence, to the heights of Sion, after having subdued their enemies, and enriched his people with the spoil of the vanquished, and the gifts of the tributary nations; of which much was probably employed in the service of the tabernacle, and afterwards in building the temple, first designed by David, "that "the Lord God might dwell," and have a fixed permanent habitation, among his people. But this whole transaction, like many others of old, being a figurative one, the apostle, Ephes. iv. 8. has applied the words before us to our blessed Saviour (the true ARK, on which the GLORY rested), who personally ascended up to the highest heavens, "led captivity "captive," by triumphing over his conquered enemies, and having received gifts from his heavenly Father, as the fruits of his victory, gave them unto men, as was most conducive to the establishment of his church, "that the Lord God might dwell among them.— "Thou hast ascended on high?" Thou, O Christ, who didst descend, from the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, to the lower parts of the earth, art again ascended, from the lower parts of the earth to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens: "thou "hast led captivity captive;" thou hast conquered the conqueror, bound the strong one, redeemed human nature from the grave, and triumphantly carried it, with thee, to the throne of God; "thou hast re- "ceived gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also;"

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and, being thus ascended into thy glory, thou hast received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, with all his gifts and graces, to bestow upon the sons of men *; even upon such as heretofore have not only broken thy laws, but appeared in arms against thee;" yet of such as these, converted by the power of thy Gospel, wilt thou form and establish a church; "that "the LORD God may dwell among them;" that so, of thy faithful people, gathered from all parts of the world, may be built up a living temple, "an habita-"tion of God through the Spirit."

19. *Blessed* be *the* LORD, who *daily loadeth us* with benefits; Heb. *carries*, or, *supports us*; even *the God of our salvation.* 20. He that is *our God*, is *the God of salvation*; *and unto God the Lord* belong *the issues from death*, Heb. *the goings forth to death*, or, *of death.*

The preceding survey of God's dispensations constraineth the church to break out into an act of praise, and to bless the preserver of men, the author of eternal "salvation;" in whose hands are the "goings "forth of death;" in other words, who has "the "keys of death and the grave;" Rev. i. 18. who is possessed of power to confine, and to release; to kill, and to make alive.

* The Psalmist mentions these gifts as received: "Thou "hast received gifts for men;" the apostle, in his citation, showeth us the end for which they were received; "He gave "gifts unto men." Or rather, as the best critics have observed, in the Hebrew idiom, to "take gifts for another," is the same as to "give them to another." Thus we read, 1 Kings iii. 24. "Take me a sword;" i. e. give, or bring it me. Gen. xviii. 5. "I will take a bit of bread;" *i. e.* for you, or to give it you—"and comfort ye your hearts."

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21. *But God shall wound the head of his enemies:* and *the hairy scalp,* or, *crown, of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.*

The meaning is—God shall strike deep, or exhaust the blood of the head of his enemies, even the hairy crown of him that goes on in his guilty practices; where the emphasis consists in the description of God's enemies, who were such as persevered in their criminal actions. This verse begins a prediction of that vengeance, which the person, who was "ascend-"ed on high," would infallibly execute upon his impenitent enemies, and which was shadowed forth in the destruction of the enemies of Israel, by David, after that the ark of God was placed upon the hill of Sion. See 2 Sam. viii. The expressions, "the "head," and "the hairy crown," denote the principal part, the strength, the pride, and the glory of the adversary, which was to be crushed, according to the original sentence; "He shall bruise thy HEAD." Gen. iii. 15.

22. *The* LORD *said, I will bring again from Bashan; I will bring* my people *again from the depths of the sea:* 23. *That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of* thine *enemies:* and *the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*

Abner, in his conference with the elders of Israel, to bring them over to David's interest, tells them, "The Lord hath spoken of David, saying: By the "hand of my servant David, I will save my people "Israel, out of the hand of the Philistines, and out "of the hand of all their enemies:" 2 Sam. iii. 18. Thus Jehovah had promised to repeat in Israel, by

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David, his glorious acts; to work as signal victories and deliverances for his people, as he had formerly done in the field of Bashan, and at the Red Sea; when they saw their enemies dead at their feet. By the glorious resurrection, and triumphant ascension of king Messiah, by the conquests of the Gospel, and the unparalleled overthrow of its opposers, were these figures realized, and these shadows changed into substances.

24. *They have seen thy goings,* or, *marches in procession, O God;* even *the goings,* or, *marches, of my God, my King, in,* or, *into the sanctuary.*

When the ark was safely deposited, the sacrifices were offered, the solemnity well-nigh concluded, and the whole assembly about to return back, Dr. Chandler supposes the singers to have struck up, and joined in the remaining part of this noble anthem. These words contain a sort of triumph, because this great work of translating the ark was now so happily accomplished. The people of Israel had a pledge and earnest of those mighty things which God would do for them, by the joyful and victorious manner in which, with the ark of his presence, he had taken possession of the place prepared for him on mount Sion, and gone "into the sanctuary." A like pledge and earnest of her future enlargement and exaltation, was the ascension of her Lord and Head to the Christian church.

25. *The singers went before, the players on instruments* followed *after; amongst* them were *the damsels playing with timbrels.*

The joy and gladness expressed by David, and

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the house of Israel, when in solemn procession, with the sound of vocal and instrumental music, they "brought up the ark of Jehovah, and set it in its "place," 2 Sam. vi. 5. 15. 17. may be considered as a prelude to that voice of universal exultation, with which the Christian church, in her holy services, doth now celebrate the resurrection and ascension of her Redeemer.

26. *Bless ye God in the congregations*, even *the* LORD, *from the fountain of Israel.*

"Bless ye God in the congregations;" in this form of words the Israelites are supposed, when accompanying the ark, to have reciprocally exhorted and encouraged each other to exert their utmost powers in the sacred employment of blessing and thanking God: "even the Lord from the fountain "of Israel:" the "fountain of Israel" is the same with the "stock, or family of Israel." See Isa. xlviii. 1. The sense of this latter clause therefore is, "Bless "the Lord, ye who are sprung from the stock of "Israel;" thus is the duty of blessing and thanksgiving enforced on the congregations of the faithful, in all ages.

27. *There* is *little Benjamin* with *their ruler, the princes of Judah* and *their council, the princes of Zebulun,* and *the princes of Naphtali.*

The literal rendering of this verse is—"There is "little Benjamin their ruler, the princes of Judah "their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the "princes of Naphtali." In this enumeration of the tribes of Israel, that were present at the removal of the ark, four only are mentioned; Benjamin and Ju-

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dah, who dwelt nearest to the city of David; Zebulun and Naphtali, who were the farthest distant from it; to show, as Dr. Chandler observes, the unanimity of the whole nation, and of all the tribes far and near, in attending this solemnity, to testify their willing acknowledgement of David for their king, and the city of David for their capital, where all the great solemnities of religion should be performed, and their annual festivals continually celebrated. Benjamin, though the youngest tribe, is named first, and called the "ruler;" because from that tribe sprang Saul, the first king of Israel. The attendance of this tribe showed, that all envy and opposition to David from Saul's party was at an end. Upon David's accession to the crown, Judah became the royal tribe, and supported the throne by its counsels. Zebulun and Naphtali were tribes of eminent learning and knowledge. See Gen. xlix. 21. Judg. v. 14. Thus, after the publication of the Gospel, the nations flocked into the church, both those that were near, and those that were afar off; power, wisdom, and learning, submitted themselves to the kingdom, and conspired to set forth the glory, of Messiah.

28. *Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.*

The former part of this verse contains a comfortable assurance given to the church, that God had made provision, and issued out orders, for her establishment and security. In the latter clause is a prayer, that he would accomplish all his counsels

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concerning her; and, as he had begun a good work, so that he would vouchsafe to perfect it unto the day of the Lord.

29. *Because of thy temple at Jerusalem, shall kings bring presents unto thee.*

David foretels, that on the establishment of the then church and worship in Jerusalem, the kings of the Gentiles should come, and make their oblations at the temple * of God; which happened in his days, and those of his son Solomon, as an earnest and figure of that plenary accession of the kings of the earth to the church of Christ, which was to take place in the latter days, under the Gospel. See 2 Sam. viii. 9—11. 1 Kings v. 1. x. 1. 24. 2 Chron. ix. 23. Isa. lx. 3. 6. Matt. ii. 11. Rev. xxi. 24.

30. *Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people,* till every one *submit himself with pieces of silver; scatter thou the people* that *delight in war.*

We have here a prophetical prayer against the enemies of the Israelitish church. The whole verse, when literally translated, runs thus—"Rebuke the "wild beast of the reeds, the congregation of the "mighty among the calves of the nations, skipping, "or exulting, with pieces of silver; scatter the "people that delight in war." By the "wild beast "of the reeds," is to be understood the Egyptian power, described by its emblem, the crocodile, or

* The tabernacle is called היכל, 1 Sam. iii. 3. This might, otherwise, seem inconsistent with the supposed occasion of the Psalm, and the times of David, when there was yet no temple there. Bishop LOWTH.

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river horse, creatures living among the "reeds" of the Nile. The "calves of the nations" intend the objects of worship among the Egyptians, their Apis, Osiris, &c. around which the "congregation of the "mighty" assembled. And by their "skipping with," or, "exulting in, pieces of silver," may either be meant their dancing at their idolatrous festivals with the tinkling instruments called "sistra," which might be made of "silver," or else it may imply their "glorying in pieces of silver," or, "in their riches." The last member of the verse is plain, "Scatter "the people that delight in war." The whole is evidently a prayer of the Prophet to this effect, that it would please God to bring down and overthrow the strength, the pride, and the idolatry of Egypt, that ancient adversary and oppressor of Israel *.—The Christian church, in like manner, through faith in the power of her Lord, risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, prayeth for the confusion of her

* Increpa regem Egypti populo tuo invidentem, increpa etiam optimates qui inter populos honore et viribus eminent, argenteis clavis, vel aliis insignibus ornati. BOSSUET. See bishop Lowth, Prælect. vi. ad fin. edit. 8vo. The sense of the verse cannot be better expressed, than it is by Mr. Merrick in his version:

The beast that from his reedy bed,
On Nile's proud banks, uplifts the head,
Rebuke, indignant; nor the throng
Forget, from whose misguided tongue
The heifer and the grazing steer
The offer'd vow, unconscious, hear;
While to the silver's tinkling sound,
Their feet in solemn dance rebound.

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implacable enemies, who delight in opposing the kingdom of Messiah.

31. *Princes, or, ambassadors, shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*

The hostile powers being overthrown, and the church of Israel fully established, the nations around her, even those which had been most given to idolatry, sued for her friendship, and came to Jerusalem, with their gifts and oblations: as, in like manner, after the defeat of Maxentius and Maximin, the Roman empire, with all its tributary provinces, was added to the church of Christ.

32. *Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the* LORD.

"Rapt into future times," the Prophet exhorteth, not Judea only, but all "the kingdoms of the earth, "to unite in chanting forth the praises of their God and "Saviour." In the fulness of time, this exhortation was heard and obeyed. For Eusebius thus describes the state of the church in the days of Constantine: "There was one and the same power of the Holy "Spirit, which passed through all the members; "one soul in all; the same alacrity of faith; one "common consent in chanting forth the praises of "God." Euseb. Eccles. Hist. b. x. chap. 2. And it deserves notice, that the primitive Christians, when, delivered from the rage of persecuting tyrants, they freely celebrated their holy festivals, could find no words so well calculated to express the joy and gladness of their hearts, as the songs of Moses, and David, and the prophets, which seemed to have been

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divinely penned on purpose for their use, upon that glorious occasion. The reader may see several very curious and beautiful instances of this, in the opening of the xth book of Eusebius's History, and in the panegyric there recorded to have been spoken by him, in a full ecclesiastical assembly, to Paulinus, bishop of Tyre, upon the consecration of that church.

33. *To him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens,* which were *of old; lo, he doth send out his voice,* and that *a mighty voice.*

The praises of the church are sung to him who, after his sufferings here below, reascended to take possession of his ancient throne, high above all heavens; who from thence speaketh to the world by his glorious Gospel, mighty and powerful, as thunder, in its effects upon the hearts of men. See Ps. xxix. throughout. The power of Christ's voice, when he was on earth, appeared by the effects which followed, when he said, "Young man, arise:" "Lazarus come forth:" "Peace, be still:" and it will yet farther appear, when "all that are in the "graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and "come forth."

34. *Ascribe ye strength unto God; his excellency* is *over Israel, and his strength* is *in the clouds,* Heb. *the skies.*

God requires his people to ascribe unto him the kingdom, and the power, and the glory; to acknowledge him as the author of life, health, and salvation of all they are, and all they have, in nature and in grace; to glorify him as the Creator and

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Governor of the world, the Redeemer and Sanctifier of his church.

35. *O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.*

The Psalmist, here exemplifying the precept laid down in the foregoing verse, ascribes to God the glory of his appearance in the sanctuary, as the God and King of Israel, terrifying and dismaying his enemies, comforting and invigorating his people. Such is the presence of a glorified Saviour, by his Spirit, in the Christian church. For this, and all other his mercies, she is bound continually to say, and, by her holy services, continually doth she say, BLESSED BE GOD.

THIRTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXIX.

ARGUMENT.

The application of many passages in this Psalm to our Lord, made by himself and his apostles, as well as the appointment of the whole, by the church, to be used on Good Friday, direct us to consider it as uttered by the Son of God, in the day of his passion. 1—5. He describeth his sufferings undergone for the sins of men; 6, 7. prayeth that his disciples may not be offended at the pain and shame of the cross *; 8—12. relateth the

* In confesso est apud Christianos, in Psalmo lxix. nobis ob oculos poni Christum, eumque passum. Nos addimus, eumque

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usage he met with at the hands of the Jews; 13—19. maketh his prayer to the Father; 20, 21. complaineth of his desolate estate, of the reproach cast upon him, and of the gall and vinegar administered to him; 22—28. foretelleth the judgements of heaven, about to fall upon the Jewish nation; 29. returneth to the consideration of his own sorrows, and prayeth for deliverance; 30, 31. praiseth the Father for the accomplishment of that deliverance; 32, 33. exhorteth all men to come and partake of it, and, 34. the whole creation to join in a chorus of thanksgiving for it; 35, 36. predicteth the salvation, edification, and perpetuity, of the church.

1. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto* my *soul.* 2. *I sink in deep mire, where* there is *no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.*

The Gospels inform us concerning the constancy and patience of Christ under his sufferings: the sufferings themselves (those in particular of his soul,)

crucifixum; quia evangelistæ Matthæus, Marcus, et Johannes, comma vigesimum secundum certæ circumstantiæ crucifixionis Christi applicârunt—Notatum igitur volumus, Christum in tota sua ad Patrem supplicatione (est enim ejusdem argumenti cum Ps. xxii.), describere mortis et calamitatis suæ genus, ut maxime pudendum, et ignominiosum. Item, ad ver. 8. 20, 21.—Christus nullas hic negligit voces, quæ probrum aut ignominiam status, in quo tunc erat, designare valent. VITRINGA, Observ. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 10.

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are largely described in the Psalms; many of which, and this among the rest, seem to have been indited beforehand by the Spirit, for HIS use in the day of trouble. As the head of the church, he here beseecheth the Father to "save," through him, his mystical body. He compares the sad situation into which he was brought, to that of a drowning man. The divine displeasure, like a stormy tempest, was let loose upon him; the sins of the world, as deep mire, enclosed and detained him; whilst all the waters of affliction went over his head, and penetrated to his vitals.

3. *I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried; mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God.*

This verse describes the effects of those supplications which the Son of God offered up, "with "strong crying and tears, in the days of his flesh;" Heb. v. 7.; of that thirst, which, through loss of blood on the cross, "dried his throat;" and of that long and patient endurance, when his "eyes failed," and were closed in darkness, while his faith "waited" for the deliverance promised by the Father. The hour is coming, when our eyes must fail, and be closed; but even then, "let us wait for our God:" in this respect, "let us die the death of that righ-"teous" person, who died for us; "and let our last "end be like his."

4. *They that hate me without a cause, are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy me,* being *mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored* that *which I took not away.*

The Jews, the Romans, and the spirits of dark-

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ness, made up that multitude of enemies, which, like an herd of evening wolves, surrounded the Lamb of God, thirsting after his blood, nor resting till they had drawn forth the very last drop of it from his heart. And thus the only innocent person in the world suffered for all its guilt, making satisfaction for wrongs which he never did, and "restoring that "which he took not away *."

5. *O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.*

These words, in the mouth of David, or any other sinful son of Adam, are plain enough. They may, nevertheless, be spoken, as the rest of the Psalm is, in the person of Christ, concerning the iniquities committed by us, but "laid on him;" which he therefore mentions, as if they had been his own; the head complaining of diseases incident only to the members †.

6. *Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.* 7. *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.*

* "Quæ non rapui"—Ex personâ Christi: ita mecum agitur, ac si rapta ab altero, ab altero, eoque innoxio, repetas; neque enim impiorum exemplo, Deo rapui honorem debitum; pro eis solvo quicunque rapuerunt; sicut scriptum est: "Propter scelus "populi mei, percussi eum." Isa. liii. 8. BOSSUET.

† So this verse is interpreted by the fathers, and many of the commentators cited by Poole, in his Synopsis—Thus also Bossuet—"Insipientiam meam et delicta mea"—Quæ in me suscepi. "Quia posuit in eo Dominus iniquitates omnium nostrum." Isa. liii. 6.

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The Son of God prefers a petition to the Father that his disciples may not be scandalized on account of his passion, or be tempted to relinquish their trust in God, at beholding his only and beloved Son forsaken on the cross; since it was not for any demerit of his own, but for the sake of God's glory, as well as man's salvation, that "he bore reproach, and shame "covered his face." It ought to be the prayer of every Christian, especially if he be a minister of the Gospel, that his sufferings in the world may not give just offence to the brethren, or the church; which they never will do, if he suffers in a good cause, with a good conscience.

8. *I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.* 9. *For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.*

The Jews were Christ's "brethren," according to the flesh. To them he was a "stranger and an alien." "He came to his own, and his own received him "not." "We know," said they, "that God spake unto "Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not from "whence he is." And again, "Thou art a Sama-"ritan, and hast a devil." John i. 11. ix. 29. viii. 48. The ground of all this enmity was the "zeal" of Christ for the reformation and purification of the church, which he manifested in his reproofs and exhortations, as also by the emblematical act of driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple. Upon this latter occasion, the evangelist tells us, "his disciples "remembered that it was written," that is, it was predicted of Messiah in this Psalm, "The zeal of

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"thine house hath eaten me up:" John ii. 17. Therefore, as he adds immediately, "the reproaches "of them that reproached thee fell on me." In calumniating and blaspheming the works of the Son of God, the Jews reproached both the Father who gave him those works to do, and the Spirit, by which he did them: all which reproaches fell on the man Christ, as the visible instrument employed in the doing of them. This last passage is thus quoted and applied by St. Paul—"Even Christ pleased not "himself: but, as it is written, The reproaches of "them that reproached thee fell on me:" Rom. xv. 3. The usage our Lord met with from his brethren, because of his zeal for the house of God, should comfort those who meet with the same usage, on the same account.

10. *When I wept* and chastened *my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.* 11. *I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.* 12. *They that sit in the gate speak against me: and I* was *the song of the drunkards.*

To expiate the sins of his creatures, the King of glory became a man of sorrows; he put on mortal flesh, as a penitential garment; he fasted, and prayed, and mourned, and wept, and humbled himself to the dust, as if he had been the offender, and we the righteous persons that needed no repentance. And what return was made him? "It was to his "reproach, and he became a proverb to them," for whom he suffered. "They that sat in the gate," or, on the "judgement-seat," which used to be in the gates of cities, even the senators and judges of the

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land, the chief priests and elders, "spake against "him," with cool and deliberate malice; while he was "the song of the drunken" and profligate, who more grossly insulted and derided him. The true followers of the holy Jesus will often experience the like treatment, from an evil and adulterous generation.

13. *But as for me, my prayer* is *unto thee, O* LORD, in *an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercies hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.*

The Son of God himself, in the midst of sorrows and sufferings, has recourse to prayer, pleading for his church the "mercies" of the Father, set forth in the promises, and his "truth," engaged to make those promises good, in the "salvation" of his chosen, through their head and representative. The "ac-"ceptable time," in which Christ prayed, was the time when he offered the great propitiatory sacrifice. Through the merit of that sacrifice it is, that we have an "acceptable time, and a day of salvation," allowed us. Behold, NOW is that time, behold NOW is that day! Let us not delay one moment to use and improve it aright.

14. *Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.* 15. *Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.*

Messiah petitions for deliverance from calamities, under the same images which were employed at the beginning of the Psalm, to describe those calamities.

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The purport of the petition is, that the sins of the world, and the sufferings due to them, may not finally overwhelm him, nor the grave "shut her mouth "upon him" for ever; but that the morning of his resurrection may at length succeed the night of his passion. Such is also the hope and the prayer of the church, and of the Christian, here below.

16. *Hear me, O* LORD, *for thy loving kindness is good; turn unto me, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.* 17. *And hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily.* 18. *Draw nigh unto my soul,* and *redeem it; deliver me because of mine enemies.* 19. *Thou hast known my reproach, my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries* are *all before me.*

As afflictions increase, the prayers are redoubled. Christ pleads with the Father for redemption from death, on account of his divine "loving kindness and "mercy;" of his own great "trouble;" of his "ene-"mies," that they might be either converted or confounded; of the "reproach, shame, and dishonour," undergone by him, that they might be wiped off, and done away; of the wrong he suffered from his adversaries, whose iniquitous proceedings were "all "before God," and known unto him. Deliverance from tribulation and persecution, is prayed for by the church, and by her faithful children, upon the same grounds.

20. *Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked* for some *to take pity, but* there was *none; and for comforters, but I found*

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none. 21. *They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

The argument urged by Christ, in these most affecting words, is, that in the extremity of his passion, he was left alone, without a comforter, a friend, or an attendant; while all that were round about him studied to infuse every bitter and acrimonious ingredient into his cup of sorrows. This was literally as well as metaphorically true, when "they gave him "to drink vinegar mingled with gall." See Matt. xxvii. 34. John xix. 28. Such are the comforts often administered, by the world, to an afflicted and deserted soul.

22. *Their table* shall become a snare before them; and* that which should have been *for* their *welfare,* Heb. *their peace offerings,* shall become *a trap.*

At this verse beginneth a prediction of those dreadful judgements which heaven has since inflicted upon the crucifiers of the Lord of glory. By their "table becoming a snare, and their peace-offerings a

* I have taken the liberty to give a future rendering to the verbs in this and the following verses. That they are to be so understood, saith Dr. Hammond, i. e. in the future sense, by way of prediction, and not as an imprecation, see St. Aug. de Civ. l. xvii. c. 19. "Hæc non optando sunt dicta, sed optandi specie, "prophetando—These things are not said by the way of wish-"ing, but under the show or scene of wishing, by prophecy." And indeed the Hebrew ה is in the future, and is most fitly rendered, "shall be." And so doth the Jewish Arab interpreter observe, that such seeming imprecations as here and elsewhere occur in this book of Psalms are not so much by way of imprecation, as by way of prophecy, or prediction of what in God's best judgements would certainly befall man. HAM. in loc.

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"trap," is pointed out the consequence of the Jews' adhering to the legal services, in opposition to him who is "the end of the law, for righteousness." After his sufferings and exaltation, to continue under the law, became not only unprofitable, but destructive, inasmuch as it implied a denial of Messiah's advent, and a renunciation of every evangelical benefit and blessing. The religion of God's own appointment was an abomination to him, when reduced to the form of godliness, deserted by its power. Christians, who pride themselves in the one, while they deny and deride the other, would do well to consider this.

23. *Thou wilt darken their eyes that they shall not see; and make their loins continually to shake.*

They who loved darkness rather than light, by the righteous judgement of God were permitted to walk on in darkness, while the blind led the blind. And such still continues to be the state of the Jews, notwithstanding that intolerable weight of woe which made "their loins to shake," and bowed down their backs to the earth. "The veil remaineth yet upon "their hearts," in the reading the Old Testament; nor can they see therein "the things which belong "unto their peace." These last two verses are cited, as spoken of Israel, by St. Paul, Rom. xi. 9, 10. Afflict us, blessed Lord, if thou seest it good for us to be afflicted; only take not from us, in our affliction, the "light" of thy truth, and the "strength" of thy grace.

24. *Thou wilt pour out thine indignation upon them, and thy wrathful anger will take hold of them.*

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Never was "indignation so poured out," never did "wrath so take hold" on any nation, as on that, which once was, beyond every other, beloved and favoured. "The wrath," says St. Paul, 1 Thess. ii. 16. "is come upon them to the utmost, εἰς τέλος; "to the end," to the very last dregs of the cup of fury. Let every church which boasteth of favours bestowed, and privileges conferred upon her, remember the consequences of their being abused by Jerusalem; and let every individual do the same.

25. *Their habitation shall be desolate,* and *none shall dwell in their tents.*

Our Lord seems to have had this passage in his view, when he said to the Jews, "Behold, your house "is left unto you desolate:" Matt. xxiii. 38. Jerusalem was by the Roman armies destroyed from the foundations. It hath been since indeed rebuilt, and inhabited by Gentiles, by Christians, and by Saracens, but no more by the Jewish people. It is remarkable, that this verse is applied, Acts i. 20. to Judas, considered as the head and representative of that apostate nation, which rejected and delivered up its Prince and Saviour to be crucified. "He was guide "to them that took Jesus:" Acts i. 16. The punishment therefore, as well as the sin of Israel, is portrayed in his person, and the same prophecy is applicable to him and to his countrymen *.

* "Fiat habitatio eorum deserta"—De Juda proditore exponitur, Act. i. 20. Congruit etiam Judæis, eversa Hierosolyma, quod Christus prædixerat: "Ecce relinquetur vobis domus "vestra deserta." Luc. xiii. 35. BOSSUET.

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26. *For they persecute* him *whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded* *.

The cause of the foregoing calamities, inflicted on the Jews, is here assigned, namely, that instead of mourning and sympathizing with Messiah, in the day when Jehovah laid on him the iniquities of us all, and afflicted him for our sakes, they, by reproaches and blasphemies, aggravated his sufferings to the uttermost; and afterwards continued to use his disciples in the same manner. It were to be wished, that the sorrows of the penitent, when wounded with a sense of sin, never subject him to the scorn and contempt of those who would be thought Christians.

27. *Thou wilt add iniquity to their iniquity; and they shall not come into thy righteousness.*

As they added affliction to the afflictions of Christ, so God permitted † them to go on, blinded and deserted, in their wickedness, "adding sin to sin," filling up the measure of their fathers, still obstinately refusing to come into the church, and partake of the "righteousness" which is by faith. From all thy judgements, good Lord, deliver us; but, above

* Datur his in verbis ratio longe maxima et gravissima, propter quam Judæi terra sua essent ejiciendi, ac nomine et prerogativis populi Dei privandi, quia nimirum "eum persequuntur, quem a "Deo percussum" vident, hoc est, quem vident ira Divina maximopere pressum, et ad summa ἀθυμίας redactum. VITRINGA, Observat. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 9.

† Deserendo, et permittendo, non operando; ut Theologi nôrunt. BOSSUET.

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all, from that which punishes one sin with another, and seals up the reprobate to destruction.

28. *They shall be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

By "the book of the living," in which the names of the "righteous are written," is to be understood the register of the true servants and worshippers of God, of those who are "justified," or made "righ-"teous," through faith. In this register, the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the ancient fathers of the Israelitish race, with their true children, stand recorded; but the degenerate and apostate Jews have been long since "blotted out;" they are no longer the peculium of heaven; nor have they any part or portion in the inheritance of the sons of God. Thus Ezekiel: "They shall not be in the assembly of my "people, nor shall they be written in the writing of "the house of Israel:" xiii. 9. And our Lord, in his conversations with the Jews, took every opportunity to tell them, that they, for their unbelief, should be "cast out," and that the Gentiles, obeying the call of the Gospel, should come from all quarters of the world, and "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, "and Jacob, in the kingdom of God."

29. *But I* am *poor and sorrowful: let thy saving health, O God,* or, *thy salvation shall,* or, *can, set me up on high.*

Messiah returns to the subject of his own sufferings, which were not a little enhanced by the consideration, that so many of his people would not be the better for them. "I am poor and sorrowful;" "poor," for he was divested of his very garments;

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"sorrowful," for he was covered over with stripes and wounds. But he knew the hour was coming, when the salvation of God would raise him from the dead, and "set him up on high." Thus should a disciple of Jesus depart out of the world, joyfully relinquishing its goods, patiently bearing its evils, and confidently expecting a resurrection to glory.

30. *I will praise the name of God with a song and magnify him with thanksgiving.*

Here, as in the xxiid, and many other Psalms, the scene changes from sorrow to joy; from a state of suffering to one of triumph; from the passion to the resurrection. Jesus, risen from the dead, declares his resolution of praising and magnifying the Father, for the salvation of the world, happily accomplished by his labours and sufferings, which were now for ever at an end. The church does the same incessantly, on earth, and in heaven.

31. This *also shall please the* LORD, *better than an ox* or *bullock that hath horns and hoofs.*

A bullock was in its prime for sacrifice, under the law, when it began to put forth its "horns and "hoofs." The infinite distance therefore, in point of value, between the best legal sacrifices, and those of obedience, love, and praise, as offered by Christ, and, through him, by his church, under the Gospel, is pointed out in this verse. See Psalm xl. 6, &c. l. 23.

32. *The humble shall see* this, and *be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God:* or, *be seeking God, and your heart shall live.*

It is foretold, that the "humble," or the "poor

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"in spirit," i. e. the meek and lowly followers of the holy Jesus, should find everlasting joy and comfort in the glad tidings of salvation; all mankind are exhorted to "seek after God," as manifested in the Gospel of his Son; and the reward promised is "life "spiritual and eternal *."

33. *For the* LORD *heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.*

An argument for our "seeking after God," is the experience of patriarchs, prophets, and saints, who in all ages have sought, and found him, by repentance and faith: and that the Lord "despiseth not his pri-"soners," is evident from what he did and suffered, to deliver their souls from the bondage of sin, their bodies from the prison of the grave, and both from the dungeon of hell. Therefore,

34. *Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas and every thing that moveth therein.*

The mercies of God in Christ are such, that they cannot worthily be praised by any thing less than an universal chorus of the whole old and new creation; and what should such a chorus celebrate, but those mercies by which all things have been made, preserved, and redeemed?

35. *For God will save Sion, and build the cities of Judah, that they,* i. e. men, *may dwell there, and have it in possession.*

The salvation and edification of the church followed the passion and resurrection of Christ. "God

* Hæc et sequentia ad redemptionem per Christum, sub figurâ solutæ captivitatis, videntur pertinere. BOSSUET.

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"will save Sion," that is, the church, which at first consisted of the apostles, who were Jews, and others of that nation by them converted to the faith. "And build the cities of Judah," or cause churches to arise in all the world, which shall from thenceforth take the names, and inherit the privileges, of "Israel "and Judah; that men," even such as God shall call from among the nations, "may dwell there," as citizens of the new Jerusalem, "and," instead of the rejected Jews, "have it in their possession."

36. *The seed also of his servants shall inherit it, and they that love his name shall dwell therein.*

The continuation of the church in the posterity of the faithful, is here predicted. Accordingly, the descendants of the proselyted Gentiles have been in possession of the Gospel privileges, for above 1700 years. And thus it will be, while they abide in the faith, and "love the name," of Jesus. Should the Gentiles apostatize as the Jews did, and the Jews be converted as the Gentiles were, then the Gospel would go from the Gentiles to the Jews, as before it went from the Jews to the Gentiles; then would there "come out of Sion the Deliverer, to turn away "ungodliness from Jacob." Rom. xi. 26.

PSALM LXX.

The words of this Psalm occur, without any material variations, in Ps. xl. verse 13, to the end. The reader is therefore referred thither for the exposition; as before, in the case of the liiid and xivth Psalms.

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FOURTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXI.

ARGUMENT.

The Psalmist, sorely distressed in his old age (see ver. 9. and 18.), by the rebellion of Absalom, which was his great affliction at that period of life, ver. 1. prayeth for the divine assistance; pleading, 2. God's righteousness, 3. and promise; 4. the iniquity of his persecutors; 5, 6. the mercies vouchsafed him from his birth; 7, 8. his being deserted and given up by man; 9. his old age; 10, 11. the taunts and insults of his adversaries: 12. he repeateth his request; 13. prophesieth the downfall of his enemies; declareth, 14. his hope, 15. his gratitude, 16. his faith; 17, 18. wisheth to be preserved, that he might show forth the power and glory of God, whose righteousness and marvellous acts, 19. he extolleth, and thence, 20, 21. promiseth himself a final redemption from all his troubles, and a restoration to honour and comfort; when, 22—24. he shall sing and speak the praises of the Lord.

1. *In thee, O* Lord, *do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion.*

The promises of salvation are made to those who, renouncing all confidence in the world and themselves, "trust" in God alone for it. For this reason

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the Psalmist so often begins his prayer with a declaration of his "faith," which is to the soul in affliction, what an anchor is to a ship in distress.

2. *Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.*

A second argument, here used, is the "righteousness" of God, who cannot but be faithful and just to his own gracious word. By that word, he had engaged to establish the temporal throne of David, and the eternal throne of the Son of David. And, by the same word, he has engaged to bring those who believe in him, through sufferings, to glory.

3. *Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me, for thou* art *my rock and my fortress.*

The protection of the Almighty, to which the troubled soul "resorts" by faith and prayer, is compared to that which a well fortified castle, or town, affords to those within it, in time of war. And the plea, upon which this petition is enforced, is in a manner the same with the former, namely, the declared purpose of God to be the Saviour of his servants; "Thou hast given commandment to save "me."

4. *Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.*

The divine assistance is implored by the Psalmist, thirdly, on the foot of the goodness of his cause, and the iniquity of his enemies. Such were Absalom, Ahithophel, &c. to David; Judas and the Jews to Christ; and such are the world, the flesh, and the

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devil, to the Christian. Against them he is to pray and fight continually; ever remembering that wickedness is at least as dangerous when it tempts, as when it persecutes; and can smile, as well as frown, a man dead.

5. *For thou* art *my hope, O* LORD *God;* thou art *my trust from my youth.* 6. *By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels; my praise* shall be *continually of thee.*

Former mercies are urged, as a fifth motive, for the divine goodness to continue those mercies. The watchful care of Heaven over us, at an age when we are able to take no care of ourselves, deserves consideration. The love of Jesus, shown in passing through a state of childhood for us, deserves a still more deep and devout consideration.

7. *I am as a wonder unto many; but thou* art *my strong refuge.*

David, banished from his kingdom, was regarded as a "wonder," or a prodigy of wretchedness; Christ, in his state of humiliation upon earth, was a "sign," every where "spoken against," as Simeon foretold he would be; Luke ii. 34. The Christian, who lives by faith, who quits possession for reversion, and who chooses to suffer with his Saviour here, that he may reign with him hereafter, appears to the men of the world, as a monster of folly and enthusiasm. But God is the "strong refuge" of all such.

8. *Let my mouth be filled* with *thy praise,* and with *thy honour, all the day.*

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Whatever men say, or think of him, the royal Prophet desires still to strengthen, and to delight himself, in doing the will, singing the praises, and setting forth the glory of God. Such likewise was thy desire, O blessed Jesus! in the days of thy flesh. Ever grant that it may be ours.

9. *Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.*

David, mindful of the noble actions which, through God's assistance, he had achieved in his youth, beseaches him not to desert his servant, when persecuted by a rebellious son, in his old age. The weaknesses and temptations peculiar to that time of life, render this a petition necessary for us all to make, before we are overtaken by it. The church findeth but too much occasion to make the same, now that she is sunk in years; when faith languisheth, charity waxeth cold, and the infirmities of a spiritual old age are coming fast upon her.

10. *For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul, take counsel together,* 11. *Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him, for* there is *none to deliver* him.

They who saw David ascending mount Olivet in tears, when Absalom had driven him from Jerusalem, and they who beheld Jesus led forth out of the same Jerusalem, to be crucified on mount Calvary, were tempted to regard both the one and the other, as finally deserted by God. They who view the church, or any member thereof, under affliction and persecution, are too frequently tempted to think the same,

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and to act accordingly; though they are so plainly taught the contrary, by the restoration of the king of Israel, and the resurrection of the Son of God.

12. *O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste to help.* 13. *Let them,* or, *they shall, be confounded* and *consumed that are against my soul; let them,* or, *they shall, be covered* with *reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.*

As the insolence of his persecutors increaseth, the distressed monarch crieth more earnestly unto God; and is so far from relinquishing his hope, that, in the midst of his sorrows, he foreseeth and foretelleth the final confusion of his enemies. The Christian, who has faith in the promises, may do likewise, in the worst of times, and the worst of circumstances. For the day cometh, when all the workers of wickedness shall be destroyed, and "death and hell shall be cast "into the lake of fire." Rev. xx. 14.

14. *But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.* 15. *My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness* and *thy salvation all the day long: for I know not the numbers* thereof.

As there is no end to the loving kindness of Jehovah, there should be none to our gratitude. The "hope" of a Christian "giveth songs in the night," and enableth him to be thankful, even in the dark season of affliction. Paul and Silas not only prayed, but also "sang praises to God, in a prison, at mid-"night." Acts xvi. 25.

16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord* GOD: *I will make mention of thy righteousness,* even *of thine only.*

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He who goeth to the battle against his spiritual enemies, should go, confiding not in his own "strength," but in that of the Lord God; not in his own "righteousness," but in that of his Redeemer. Such an one engageth, with omnipotence on his side, and cannot but be victorious.

17. *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.* 18. *Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not: until I have showed thy strength unto* this *generation*, and *thy power to every one* that *is to come.*

It was the God of Israel, who "taught" David, as a warrior, to conquer, and, as a Psalmist, to "declare the wondrous works" of his great Benefactor. He requests to be preserved in his old age, until, by completing his victories, and his Psalms composed to celebrate them, he had "showed the "strength and power of God," not only to the men of the "generation" in which he lived, but also to "every one that should come," or arise in after-times, and chant those divine hymns in the assemblies of the faithful, throughout all ages. Doth St. Paul wish to have his life continued upon earth; it is only that he may edify the church, and glorify God. Otherwise, it is far "better," says he, "to depart, "and to be with Christ."

19. *Thy righteousness, O God,* is *very high, who hast done great things: O God, who* is *like unto thee!*

What a force is now added to these words, by the actual exaltation of the righteous Saviour "very

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"high" above all heavens, and by the "great "things" which he hath "done" for our souls! Let us think on these things, and we shall most affectionately say, with David, "O God, who is like "unto thee!" Delightful is thy love, O Lord Jesu, beyond all pleasure, more precious than much fine gold, and honourable above the thrones of the mighty! The world languisheth and fadeth away at thy presence, whose beauty is immortal, whose treasures diminish not, and whose glory endureth through the unnumbered ages of eternity.

20. Thou *which hast showed me great and sore trouble, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.* 21. *Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*

In David, delivered out of his troubles, and restored to his throne, we behold our Lord, after his "great and sore trouble, literally quickened, or re-"vived, brought up again from the depths of the "earth, increased in greatness, and comforted on "every side." In him we were virtually, by his grace we are actually, raised from sin and sorrow, to righteousness and comfort; and through his power we shall be raised, from dust and corruption, to glory and immortality.

22. *I will also praise thee with the psaltery,* even *thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel!* 23. *My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I sing unto thee: and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.* 24. *My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long; for they*

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are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

The truth of God, in accomplishing his promises, by the redemption of our souls, and the confusion of our spiritual enemies, is a subject which demands a never-ceasing tribute of gratitude and love, of praise and thanksgiving. To celebrate it aright, with the melody of instruments, voices, and affections, all in perfect concord, is the duty and delight of the church militant; which, when thus employed, affords the best resemblance of the church triumphant.

PSALM LXXII.

ARGUMENT.

David, praying for Solomon, foretelleth his peaceful and glorious reign, and under that figure, in most lively and beautiful colours, portrayeth the kingdom of Messiah; 1—4. its righteous administration; 5. its duration; 6, 7. its blessings; 8. its extent; 9—11. the accession of the Gentiles to it; 12—14. the redemption to be wrought, and, 15. the prayers and praises to be offered up in it; 16. its miraculous increase and fruitfulness; 17. its perpetuity and universality: 18, 19. a doxology sung to God for it.

1. *Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy*

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righteousness unto the king's son *. 2. *He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgement.*

In this prophetical prayer, the aged monarch of Israel, about to resign the kingdom into the hands of his son Solomon, makes unto God the request of a wise father for him. He asks such a portion of wisdom and integrity from above, as might enable the young prince to govern aright the people of God, and to exhibit to the world a fair resemblance of that king of Israel, who was, in the fulness of time, to sit upon "the throne of his father David;" Luke i. 32. "to reign in righteousness;" Isa. xxxii. 1. and "to have all judgement committed unto him;" John v. 22.

3. *The mountains shall bring*, or, *bear, peace to the people, and the little hills, in*, or, *by, righteousness.*

In other words, peace, manifested by its consequence, plenteousness, shall be upon all the mountains and little hills of Judea, by means of that righteous judgement which Solomon will execute in the land. And thus in the days of Messiah, "Beautiful upon the mountains were the feet of them "that brought the glad tidings of peace;" which the fruits of the Spirit, in the churches, plainly showed to have been derived from above, through the righ-

* The "king," and the "king's son," are the same person; a character that belongs to none so properly as to Solomon, who was the first prince that was at the same time "king," and "son of a king." MUDGE.—Dr. Chandler is of the same opinion.

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teousness of the Redeemer, producing "peace on "earth."

4. *He shall judge the poor of the people: he shall save the children of the needy; and shall break in pieces the oppressor.*

It is the part of justice, in well-ordered governments, to see that the "poor and needy have right;" to break the teeth of "oppression," and pluck indigence from its devouring jaws. This Christ performed, when, having undertaken the cause of his people against the adversary, he "saved" them by his resurrection, and "broke in pieces" the power of the great OPPRESSOR.

5. *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.*

The kingdom of Solomon continued, in his own person, only for forty years; but in his seed, that is, Christ, it is established throughout all generations. HE reigneth "over the house of Jacob for ever, and "of his kingdom there shall be no end:" Luke i. 33. His dominion over the world by his providence, and in the church by the influences of his grace, is to be coeval with that of the celestial luminaries in nature. And when the "moon shall be confounded, "and the sun ashamed," when the heavens shall be dissolved, and the earth burnt up, "the Lord of "hosts shall reign on mount Zion," in the Jerusalem above, in glory everlasting. See Isa. xxiv. 23.

6. *He shall come down like the rain upon the mown grass: as showers* that *water the earth.*

Refreshing and salutary, as the drops of heaven to the shorn and parched grass, is the mild admi-

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nistration of a wise und pious prince to his subjects. And what image can convey a better idea of those most beneficial and blessed effects, which followed the descent of the Son of God upon the earth, and that of the Spirit, at the day of Pentecost? The prophets abound with descriptions of those great events, couched in terms borrowed from the philosophy of rain and dew. See Isa. xliv. 3. lv. 10. Hos. xiv. 5. Heb. vi. 7. In the last words of David, the reign of Messiah is described under this figure: "He shall be as the tender grass, springing out of "the earth by clear shining after rain." I cannot help subjoining bishop Sherlock's masterly illustration of this passage—"There cannot be a more "lively image of a flourishing condition, than what "is conveyed to us in these words. The grass, which "is forced by the heat of the sun, before the ground "is well prepared by rains, is weak and languid, "and of a faint complexion; but when clear shining "succeeds the gentle showers of spring, the field "puts forth its best strength, and is more beauti-"fully arrayed, than even Solomon in all his glory." Disc. vol. v. p. 89.

7. *In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.*

By means of rain and dew, the grass springeth out of the ground. In the kingdom of Solomon, through the influences of his wisdom, good men were encouraged, righteousness flourished, and the land enjoyed tranquillity. In the days of Messiah, the fruit of the Spirit of righteousness, and the fruit of righteousness, was "abundance of peace." He was the

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true "Melchisedek," or "King of righteousness," and therefore the true Solomon, the "King of Salem, "the Prince of peace." And HIS peace is to endure, when the moon shall have ceased to vary her appearances, and when a period shall be put to all sublunary vicissitudes.

8. *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth,* or, *land.*

As applicable to the kingdom of Solomon, this verse describes the extent and limits of the promised "land;" if it be interpreted of the wide-extended empire of Christ, that empire knows no bounds, but those of the "earth" itself. The Hebrew word אֶרֶץ, is often used for both, and as the dominion of Solomon represented that of a greater than Solomon, both are comprehended in the same words. And it is observable, that when the prophet Zechariah foretels the advent of "the King of Sion," in great humility, "meek, and riding on an ass," he describes the extent of his kingdom in these words—"His "dominion shall be even from sea to sea, and from "the river even to the ends of the earth." Zech. ix. 9, 10.

9. *They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him: and his enemies shall lick the dust.*

Distant nations submitted themselves to the sceptre, and prostrated themselves before the throne, of Solomon, foreshowing the conversion of the Heathen world (in the figurative language of prophecy, frequently styled, "the wilderness") to the Gospel, and the lowly adoration to be made by penitent sinners, at the footstool of the King of glory. They who

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take not the advantage of the day of grace, will feel the rod of his power in the day of vengeance, when his "enemies" shall be subjected to him; when death himself shall be destroyed; and "dust shall be the "serpent's meat." Isa. lxv. 25. Gen. iii. 14.

10. *The kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.*

This verse suggesteth to our meditation several curious and interesting particulars, all tending to one and the same end. As, 1. The munificent presents and immense treasures, brought to Solomon from Tarshish, and the isles of the Gentiles: 1 Kings x. 22, &c. 2. The coming of the queen of Sheba from the south, with her gifts and acknowledgements, to Jerusalem. 3. The offerings made by the eastern magi, as the first-fruits of the Gentiles, to the Saviour of the world. And, lastly, the accession of the nations to the faith (even these "isles of the Gentiles"), bringing their glory and honour into the city of God. See Isa. xlix. lx. Rev. xxi. 24.

11. *Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.*

It is said, 2 Chron. ix. that "all the kings of the "earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his "wisdom; that he reigned over all the kings, from "the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and "to the border of Egypt; and that they brought unto "him horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands." The dominion of Christ is universal; and it will appear to be so at the last day; when, before men

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and angels, he shall prove his claim to the title, "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

12. *For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and* him *that hath no helper.* 13. *He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.* 14. *He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*

These three verses, considered as describing the just and merciful administration of Solomon, need no exposition. As prophetical of Messiah's reign, they may be thus connected with the context, and paraphrased—The kings and the nations of the earth shall accede to the church of Christ, induced so to do by the fame of his mercy, no less than by that of his majesty. They shall hear of the great deliverance wrought by him for the poor in spirit, who make their prayer unto him, confessing their sins, and acknowledging the inability of any creature, in heaven or earth, to recover them from their lost estate. These he shall spare, and pardon, and save from sin, and from death, and from hell. He shall, for this purpose, break the snares, and destroy the power, of their great oppressor, the devil; and so dear shall their blood be in his sight, that he shall shed his own for it; after which, arising to a new and immortal life, he shall accomplish the eternal redemption of his servants.

15. *And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for him continually,* and *daily shall he be praised.*

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As Solomon's reign was long and prosperous, that of Messiah is everlasting and glorious: as the rich brought presents to the one; so the nations offered up themselves, their possessions, their souls and their bodies, to the other: as the former was continually "prayed for," and blessed by his subjects, who owed peace and plenteousness to his government; so, with regard to the latter, prayer is made ever in the church, for the increase and consummation of his kingdom; and "daily is he praised," by his people, for all the riches of grace, for all the comforts of the Spirit, and for all the hopes of glory, which they possess, and enjoy, through him.

16. *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and* they *of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*

It is here foretold, that in the days of Solomon, wonderful shall be the fruitfulness of Judea; of the country in corn, by which the city is supported; and of the city in people, who, by their numbers, constitute the strength of the king. The fruitfulness of the country was to be so great, that from an "handful "of corn," and that sown on the most barren spot, the "top of a mountain," should issue a produce, the ears of which would "shake" and wave in the winds, like the woods of "Lebanon;" while in the city, a fresh progeny of Israelites was still springing up, and advancing to maturity, like the unnumbered blades of grass, in a field which the Lord hath blessed: see 1 Kings iv. 20. &c. Such, under the reign of king Messiah, was the amazing increase of

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the "word," when sown in hearts barren before; such the astonishing multiplication of citizens in the Christian church: as it is written, Acts vi. 7. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." So let it be, blessed Lord, wheresoever thy Gospel is preached, throughout the world.

17. *His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued,* Heb. *propagated, as long as the sun: and* men *shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.*

The person and kingdom of Solomon have been used all along as a channel, through which to convey a most illustrious prophecy concerning those of Christ. But here the type seems to be wholly absorbed in the great antitype. His "name," his saving name, "shall indeed endure for ever, propagated," with the faith, through all the generations of men, while the "sun," another of his representatives, shall continue to maintain his station in the heavens, and to diffuse his light upon the earth. In HIM, as it was promised to Abraham, shall all the true children of Abraham be "blessed" with the blessings of eternity; "all nations shall call HIM "blessed," as they are taught to do in the remaining verses of this exalted composition.

18. *Blessed* be *the* LORD *God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.* 19. *And blessed* be *his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled* with *his glory; Amen, and Amen.*

Blessed, therefore, be thou, O Lord Jesu! for thou art the Lord God, even the God of Israel, who

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hast wrought such miracles of mercy, for the salvation of the church: and blessed, by the tongues of men and angels, be thy holy and glorious name; and let the whole earth be filled with the amazingly transcendent and inconceivable majesty of thy most excellent glory, for evermore! So be it, so be it.

FOURTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

The person speaking in this Psalm relates, 1—3. the process of a temptation, occasioned by his beholding the prosperity of wicked men upon earth, which he describes, 4—11. with, 12—14. the suggestions of nature on the occasion; but, in opposition to these, grace urges, 15. the examples of saints, 16. the difficulty of judging concerning God's dispensations, and, above all, 17—20. the final issue of things at the last day, and the end of that prosperity, which had excited his envy. Perfectly satisfied with these considerations, 21, 22. he owns his uneasiness to have sprung from his ignorance; and, 23—28. closes the Psalm with the most affectionate expressions of his full trust and confidence in the divine mercy and goodness. No temptation is more common, or more formid-

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able, than that above-mentioned. A more powerful and effectual antidote to it cannot be devised, than this most instructive and beautiful Psalm affords.

1. *Truly God* is *good to Israel,* even *to such as are of a clean heart.*

This declaration seems to be the result of a long struggle in the mind of the Psalmist, between nature and grace, in which the latter proves victorious, and, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, determines, against the suggestions of the former, that God is the same good and merciful God to his church and people, if they do but preserve inviolable their fidelity to him, whether, in this world, they enjoy prosperity, or endure affliction.

2. *But as for me, my feet were almost gone: my steps had well nigh slipt.* 3. *For I was envious at the foolish,* when *I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

Temptations impede the progress of the Christian in the way of righteousness, and incline him to fall; as it happens to one who walks in a slippery path. The temptation here complained of, is that excited by seeing wealth and honour in the hands of infidelity and villany, while the faithful servants of God are covered with infamy, and oppressed by poverty. A prospect of this sort is apt to make us distrust the love of heaven towards us, and its providence over us. For our benefit, therefore, in the course of this Psalm, the disease is particularized, and the remedy prescribed.

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4. *For* there are *no bands,* or, *pangs, in their death; but their strength* is *firm.*

Health and strength are to be reckoned among those temporal blessings, which the long suffering of God sometimes permits the ungodly to enjoy. And accordingly we find men of that cast, who live without sickness, and die in a manner without pain: while others, of a contrary character, are worn with chronical, or racked with acute disorders, which bring them with sorrow and torment to the grave.

5. *They* are *not in trouble as* other *men: neither are they plagued like* other *men.*

Calamities, which overwhelm the small concerns of the poor righteous man, approach not the borders of the wealthy sinner. Far from poverty, as free from disease, he seems to pass his days exempted from the miseries of mankind, without labour or anxiety; and not so much as to think of those who, distressed on all sides, can scarcely earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. See this sentiment beautifully dilated, Job xxi. See also Jer. xii. 1.

6. *Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them* as *a garment.*

Among men who have not the love of God in their hearts, or his fear before their eyes, pride and oppression are the offspring of worldly prosperity. The daughters attend the mother wherever she goeth, and show themselves openly without reserve: "pride "compasseth them about as a chain;" they wear it for an ornament about their necks, as gold chains, collars, or necklaces, were worn; see Cant. iv. 9. discovering it by their stately carriage; see Isa. iii.

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16. "Violence covereth them as a garment;" it appeareth outwardly in all they say or do, and engrosseth the whole man; they are, as the English phrase is, "made up of it."

7. *Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*

"A man may be known by his look," saith the son of Sirach, Ecclus. xix. 29. The choleric, the lascivious, the melancholy, the cunning, &c. &c. frequently bear their tempers and ruling passions strongly marked on their countenances: but more especially doth the soul of a man look forth at his "eyes." The "pride" of the ungodly, occasioned by great and unexpected success in the world, hardly ever fails to betray itself in this way.

8. *They are corrupt, and speak wickedly* concerning *oppression: they speak loftily.*

Prosperity, in an irreligious heart, breeds "corruption," which from thence is emitted by the breath in conversation, to infect and taint the minds of others. A circle of fawning dependants is never wanting, to whom the poor, vain, and ignorant wretch, exalted in his own conceit above the level of mortality, may, from the chair, without control, dictate libertinism and infidelity, bidding defiance to the laws of God and man.

9. *They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth.*

The blessings for which a Christian praises his God, only cause the infidel to blaspheme him. So true is that of Solomon—"The prosperity of fools destroyeth them." What a pity is it, that the former

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should ever be less zealous and indefatigable in diffusing his piety, than we know the latter is in propagating his blasphemies through the earth!

10. *Therefore his people return thither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.*

It seemeth impossible to ascertain, with any degree of precision, the meaning of this verse, or to whom it relates. Some think it intends those people who resort to the company of the wicked, because they find their temporal advantage by it; while others are of opinion, that the people of God are meant, who, by continually revolving in their thoughts the subject here treated of, namely, the prosperity of the wicked, are sore grieved, and enforced to shed tears in abundance. Mr. Mudge translates the verse thus—"Therefore let his (God's) people come be-"fore them, and waters in full measure would be "wrung out from them;" that is, "Should God's "people fall into their hands, they would squeeze "them to the full, they would wring out all the "juice in their bodies." He takes "waters in full "measure" to have been a proverbial expression.

11. *And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?*

They who interpret the foregoing verse of the people of God, tempted by the success of the ungodly to distrust his providence, suppose this and the following verses to be uttered by "them," as questioning whether God had any regard to what passed here below. But, to avoid confusion of persons, I would rather suppose the foregoing verse (to whomsoever it may belong) to be parenthetic, and the verse now

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under consideration to be an epicurean, atheistical speech in the mouth of the wicked above described at large; after which the Psalmist goes on, in his own person, as from the beginning, to relate the temptation which he underwent, and the issue of it.

12. *Behold, these* are *the ungodly who prosper in the world, they increase* in *riches.*

The temptation is now stated in its full force. "These" worthless, ungodly, blasphemous wretches, whose characters I have been delineating, "these" are the men who prosper in the world, who succeed in every thing they undertake, and roll in riches! What are we to think of God, his providence, and his promises?

13. *Verily, I have cleansed my heart* in *vain, and washed my hands in innocency:* 14. *For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.*

Nature will be apt upon this occasion to suggest, that all my faith, my charity, and my devotion, all my watching, and fastings, in short, all the labour and pains I have taken in the way of goodness, have been altogether vain and fruitless; since, while the rebellious enemies of God enjoy the world and themselves at pleasure, I, who continue his servant, am in perpetual tribulation and affliction.

15. *If I say, I will speak,* or, *declare,* or, *preach, thus; behold, I should offend* against *the generation of thy children.*

The Psalmist, having thus particularized the disease, proceeds now, like a skilful physician of the soul, to prescribe a medicine for it, which is com-

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pounded of many salutary ingredients. And first, to the suggestion of nature, grace opposes the examples of the children of God, who never fell from their hope in another world, because of their sufferings in this. For a man, therefore, to distrust the divine goodness on that account, is to belie their hope, renounce their faith, and strike his name out of their list.

16. *When I thought to know this, it* was *too painful for me.*

A second reason why a man should not be too forward to arraign God's dispensations of injustice, is the extreme difficulty of understanding and comprehending the whole of them, which indeed is not to be done by the human mind, unless God himself shall vouchsafe it the necessary information. "It "was too painful for me," says the Psalmist;

17. *Until I went into the sanctuary of God;* then *understood I their end.*

The third argument, with which we may repress the spirit of murmuring and distrust, so apt to be excited by the prosperity of the wicked, is one communicated to us by the word of God, which alone can acquaint us with what is to be the "end," the final portion of sinners at the last day. This is an arrow from the heavenly quiver, which brings down our enemy at once, and lays Dagon prostrate before the ark.

18. *Surely thou didst,* or, *dost, set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.*

Worldly prosperity is as the narrow and slippery summit of a mountain, on which, to answer the de-

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signs of his providence, God permits the wicked, during his pleasure, to take their station; till at length the fatal hour arrives, when, by a stroke unseen, they fall from thence, and are lost in the fathomless ocean of sorrow, torment, and despair.

19. *How are they* brought *into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*

The sudden alteration which death makes in the state of a powerful and opulent sinner, cannot but affect all around him, though they behold but one part of it. How much more would they be astonished and terrified, if the curtain between the two worlds were undrawn, and the other half of the change disclosed to view! Let faith do that which sight cannot do; and then the ungodly, however wealthy and honourable, will surely cease to be the objects of our envy.

20. *As a dream when* one *awaketh,* so, O LORD, *when thou awakest,* or, *causest them to awake, thou shalt despise their image.*

The life of the ungodly is a sleep; their happiness a dream, illusive and transitory; at best a shadow; afterwards, nothing. At the day of death, the soul is roused out of this sleep, and the dream vanishes. When God shall thus awaken them, he will "despise "their image," he will bring to nought, and render utterly contemptible, even in their own sight, as well as that of himself, of his holy angels, and the spirits of the righteous, those imaginary and fantastic pleasures, for which they have lost the substantial joys and glories of his heavenly kingdom. Now, therefore, while it will not be in vain, "Awake

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"thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and "Christ shall give thee light:" Ephes. v. 14. See Job xx. 4. &c. Isa. xxix. 8.

21. *Thus my heart was grieved;* Heb. *in a ferment, and I was pricked in my reins.* 22. *So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was* as *a beast before thee.*

The Psalmist, fully satisfied with the conduct of providence, reflects upon the folly of his former uneasiness, and humbly owns, that his doubts were occasioned solely by his ignorance of God's ways; while he formed his judgement of them without having duly taken into consideration the final issue of things. The last day, when it comes, will bring with it a solution of all difficulties. He who bears impressed upon his mind such an idea of that day, as the Scriptures can give him, may solve them now.

23. *Nevertheless, I* am *continually with thee; thou hast holden* me *by my right hand.*

The remainder of the Psalm contains the most dutiful and affectionate expressions of a mind perfectly at ease, and reposing itself, with comfortable assurance, on the loving kindness of the Lord, of which it had experienced a fresh instance, in its support under the late temptation, and complete victory over it. "I "am continually with thee," as a child under the tender care of a parent; and, as a parent, during my danger of falling in a slippery path, "thou hast "holden me," thy child, "by my right hand."

24. *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me* to *glory.*

He who, but a little while ago, seemed to question

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the providence of God over the affairs of men, now exults in happy confidence of the divine mercy and favour towards himself, nothing doubting but that grace would ever continue to guide him upon earth till glory should crown him in heaven. Such are the blessed effects of "going into the sanctuary," and consulting the "lively oracles" in all our doubts, difficulties, and temptations.

25. *Whom have I in heaven* but thee? *And* there is *none upon earth* that *I desire beside,* Heb. *with,* or, *in comparison of, thee.*

The believing soul seems here to speak in the person and with the affection of a spouse, declaring, that not only earth, but heaven itself, would be unsatisfactory and comfortless, without the presence of her beloved Redeemer, the God of her salvation. But there is a pathos in the words themselves, which, though the Christian feels, the commentator cannot express.

26. *My flesh and my heart faileth*: but *God* is *the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

None of these things, in the abundance of which the wicked place their happiness, can deliver us in the day of death. "Flesh" must revert to dust, and the "heart" must cease its beating. He alone, therefore, is the proper object of our faith and love, who can support, and carry us through the dreadful hour, and then raise us again, to be our "portion for ever." Lord Jesu, who hast so graciously promised to become our portion in the next world, prevent us from choosing any other in this.

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27. *For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed,* or, *wilt destroy, all them that go a whoring from thee.*

They who are "far from God," are just so far from salvation; and of course, if they remain in that situation, must "perish." Nor have they reason to expect any other fate, who in their hearts depart from the holy Jesus, after he has betrothed them to himself in righteousness; and prefer to him the vilest and basest of his enemies, the world and the flesh, by whose wicked hands he was crucified and slain.

28. *But* it is *good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the* LORD *God, that I may declare all thy works.*

As if the Psalmist had said, in other words—Hear, therefore, the conclusion of the whole matter. Let others, dazzled by the blaze of worldly prosperity, forsake God, to obtain a share of it; or murmur against him, because they cannot obtain it. I am persuaded, it now is, and finally will be, "good," delightful, profitable, and honourable, "for me to "draw near, and join myself "to him;" which, in this life, I can do no otherwise, than by believing and hoping in his holy name; "I will put my trust "in the LORD God," and excite others to do the same by "declaring his works," and dispensations; that all may perceive what an amazing difference will one day be made, between him who lusteth after the creature, and him who loveth the Creator.

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PSALM LXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Upon whatever occasion this Psalm might have been originally composed, it is plainly intended for the use of the church in time of persecution. 1. She bemoans herself as deserted by God; the return of whose favour she entreats, 2. on account of his having redeemed her; 3—9. of the ravages made, and, 10. the reproaches thrown out, by the enemy; 11—15. she reminds him of the wonders formerly wrought in her behalf, and, 16, 17. of his power and goodness, manifested in the common course of nature; 19. of the relation in which she stands to him; 20. of his covenant; 21, 22. of the honour of his name, and, 23. the increasing fury of her adversaries, just ready to swallow her up.

1. *O God, why hast thou cast* us *off for ever?* why *doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*

God not only permits, but, by his Prophet, who indited this form of words, directs the church, under persecution, to expostulate with him for having, to all appearance, finally deserted her. And that, in such deplorable circumstances, she may move his compassion, and, as it were, revive his love towards her, she is taught to remind him of that endearing

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relation which once subsisted between him and his people, the relation of a "shepherd" to his "sheep." The soul, when led into captivity, and detained in it, by a prevailing lust or passion, may make her prayer likewise in these words, adapted to her case.

2. *Remember thy congregation* which *thou hast purchased of old; the rod,* or *tribe,* or *portion, of thine inheritance,* which *thou hast redeemed; this mount Sion, wherein thou hast dwelt.*

The Israelitish church pleads for mercy, upon these considerations, that God had formerly vouchsafed to redeem her from the Egyptian bondage, and to fix his residence on mount Sion, all which would prove to have been done in vain, should he leave her, at last, in the hands of her enemies. The redemption by Jesus Christ, and his habitation in the church Christian by his Spirit, are the corresponding arguments to be urged, on similar occasions, by her, and by the believing soul.

3. *Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations:* even *all* that *the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.*

God is represented as having withdrawn himself, and departed afar off; he is therefore entreated to return without delay, to view the long-lasting desolations of the once highly favoured city, and the ravages made by aliens in the sanctuary; which could not but excite in him compassion for his people, and indignation against their enemies. The outward calamities of a persecuted church should cause us to reflect on the sad havoc and devastation

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made by sin and Satan in the soul, which before was the city and temple of the living God.

4. *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations*, or, *places of worship; they set up their ensigns* for *signs.*

No sound can be more shocking than the confused clamours of an Heathen army sacking the temple; no sight so afflicting, as that of "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place." Turbulent passions are the enemies, which raise an uproar of confusion in the heart; wealth, power, and pleasure, are the idols which profane that sanctuary.

5. A man *was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.* 6. *But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.*

The difficulty of these verses lies altogether in the first word, יודע, without which, their literal construction is as follows—"As he who lifted up axes in the thick wood, so now they," the enemies abovementioned, "break down the carved work thereof," of the sanctuary, "with hatchets and hammers." Some interpreters render יודע, impersonally; not "He was famous," but "It is well known," it is manifest, O God, to all the world, "that as he who lifteth up axes, so now," &c. Or, may not the sense be—"as יודע, a knowing, skilful person, one who understands his business, lifted up the axe in the thick wood, so now men set themselves to work to demolish the ornaments and timbers of

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"the sanctuary." The words suggest another reason why God should arise and have mercy upon Sion, lest his name should be blasphemed among the nations, when they saw and heard of the sacrilegious and horrible destruction wrought by the enemy; whom neither the majesty of the temple, nor the reverence of its divine inhabitant, could restrain from defacing the beauty of holiness. The ornaments of the internal and spiritual temple, sometimes suffer as much from the fury of inordinate affections, as the carved work of the sanctuary ever did from the armies of Nebuchadnezzar or Antiochus.

7. *They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled,* or, *desecrated,* by casting down, *the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground.*

The gates of the second temple were set on fire by Antiochus; see 1 Mac. iv. 38. but the whole fabric of the first was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar. When animosities break forth, and contentions are raised in the church, "fire is cast into the sanctu-"ary:" when the soul sinks under a temptation, the "dwelling-place of God's name is desecrated to the "ground."

8. *They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land.*

Such is the rage of infidels, when it pleases God, for the sins of his people, to let them loose upon the church as beasts of prey. From scenes like these, we learn the temper and disposition of that raging adversary of mankind and his associates; who, if permitted, would root Christianity out of every heart.

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"Watch, therefore, and pray," saith the Captain of our salvation to all his soldiers.

9. *We see not our signs*, there is *no more any prophet, neither* is there *among us any that knoweth how long*.

Darkness is horrible in itself, and adds horror to every thing else. The church therefore complains that, in the midst of all her other troubles, she was deserted by the light of heaven. No "signs," or miracles, were exhibited for her comfort; there was no "prophet," to inform her concerning the will of God, or to promise her an "end" of her afflictions, as Daniel did when she was a captive in Babylon. Sin darkens the understanding, taking from it that light, the direction of which it then stands most in need of.

10. *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?* 11. *Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? Pluck* it *out of thy bosom.*

To an enumeration of calamities succeeds a prayer for deliverance, grounded on the necessity of God's vindicating the honour of his name from the insolent and blasphemous reproaches and scoffs of the enemy: see Ezek. xx. 19. He is, therefore, entreated to make bare his arm in the sight of the nations, and to let his right hand become glorious in the vindication of his name, and the defence of his inheritance.

12. *For God* is *my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.*

And that he will do so, there is always reason for

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the afflicted church to hope; because, as her "King," he conducted and protected her of old, and wrought "salvation" for her upon the earth; temporal salvation by the hand of Moses; eternal salvation by the power of Christ.

13. *Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.*

The first part of this verse alludes to that marvellous act of omnipotence, which divided the Red Sea, for Israel to pass over; the second part, to the return of its waves upon the heads of the Egyptians, who, like so many sea monsters, opening their mouths to devour the people of God, were overwhelmed, and perished in the mighty waters. The Christian church is taught to contemplate, under this figure, the salvation of her children, and the destruction of their spiritual enemies, by the waters of baptism: see 1 Cor. x. 2. and the Office for Baptism in the Church of England. Parallel to this passage in our Psalm, is that most sublime one, Isa. li. 9, 10, 11. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the "Lord! awake, as in the ancient days, in the gene-"rations of old. Art thou not it, that hath cut "Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not "it, that hath dried the sea, the waters of the great "deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way "for the ransomed to pass over? Therefore, the re-"deemed of the Lord shall return, and come with "singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be "upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and "joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

14. *Thou breakest the heads of leviathan in*

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pieces, and *gavest him* to be *meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.*

"Leviathan" stands for Pharaoh, or the Egyptian power, represented by the Egyptian animal, the crocodile of Nile, the Egyptian river. The "heads of leviathan" are the princes of Egypt, the leaders of the Egyptian armies. And "the people, "or inhabitants, of the wilderness," to whom they were given for a prey, are not men, but a species of wild beasts, hunting the deserts, for which the word עיים is used, Isa. xiii. 21. and xxxiv. 14. The sense therefore is, that the bodies of Pharaoh and his captains were thrown on shore by the sea, and so became food for the wild beasts of the neighbouring deserts. The final destruction of the adversaries of Messiah's kingdom is described at large under a like image, Rev. xix. 17, &c.

15. *Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood*—that is, draw forth the *fountain and the flood*, by *cleaving* the rock—*thou driedst up mighty rivers.*

Two other remarkable exertions of the divine power in favour of the Israelites, are here referred to. Water was brought out of the rock, to satisfy their thirst in the time of drought; and the river Jordan was dried up, to open the passage for them into Canaan. In the former of these transactions, faith beholds the water of life springing from the Rock of Salvation; in the latter are discerned the mystic death and resurrection of Christians, as a prelude to the corporeal; when, rising from the depths of the grave, they shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

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16. *The day is thine, the night also is thine, thou hast prepared the light and the sun.* 17. *Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.*

From the miraculous interpositions of God, in behalf of his people, the church passes to those ordinary and standing evidences of his goodness towards us, the sweet vicissitudes of light and darkness; and the grateful succession of times and seasons; by which man is taught, in the most sorrowful night, to look for a joyful morning; and, during the severest winter, to expect a reviving spring. Thus is the revolving year our constant instructor and monitor; incessantly inculcating the duties of faith and hope, as well as those of adoration, gratitude, and praise.

18. *Remember this,* that *the enemy hath reproached, O* LORD, *and* that *the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.* 19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude* of the wicked, *forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.*

After endeavouring to support her own faith, and excite the zeal of God for his inheritance, by a rehearsal of former mercies, the church again urges the argument of "reproach," touched on before at ver. 10. and then reminds her Saviour of that endearing appellation of his "turtle-dove," by which he had not disdained to address her in times past. This turtle-dove, simple, defenceless, solitary, meek, timid, and mournful, was in danger of being speedily devoured by her inveterate and implacable enemies; who, like birds of prey, beset her on all sides, thirst-

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ing impatiently for her blood. What an irresistible force do these circumstances give to the words—"O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the "multitude of the wicked; and forget not the con-"gregation of thy poor for ever!" Let us not fail, in the hour of temptation, to use them, and try the success of them.

20. *Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth*; or, *the land, are full of the habitations of cruelty.*

The main anchor of the holy ark, in storms and tempests, is faith in the COVENANT of grace, made from the beginning in Messiah; communicated to Noah, Abraham, David, &c. as his illustrious representatives, and in them to the house of Israel; accomplished (as Zacharias beareth witness by his song, Luke i. 72, &c.) at the birth of Christ, and then extended to the Gentiles. To this covenant, and the promises made therein, the church here appeals, at a time when the enemy ravaged the promised land at pleasure, and every thing seemed to forebode the utter extirpation of the law and people of God. Hither, therefore, the soul is to fly for refuge, when nothing else seems capable of affording any.

21. *O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.*

It is for the honour of God, that they who have recourse to him for help should not, by "returning" without it, suffer "shame" and confusion, in the presence of their insulting adversaries. And another

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